Men-at-Arms

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Hitler's Blitzkrieg Enemies 1940

Denmark, Norway, Netherlands & Belgium

Nigel Thomas PhD • Illustrated by Johnny Shumate

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INTRODUCTION

A Norwegian private wearing the M1934 enlisted ranks' field uniform; the M1914 uniform was more common in 1940, however. The M1931 'Baltic' helmet has the M1935 badge. The tunic has exposed grey buttons with a branch-of-service design, an unpiped collar and pointed cuffs, but he has removed his shoulder straps. His equipment comprises a brown leather waistbelt, support straps and rifle ammunition pouches, M1894 canvas bread-bag, M1934 water bottle, and on his back the M1899 Bergan rucksack with mess tin, entrenching tool and shelter-half. He holds a 6.5mm M1894 Krag-Jørgensen rifle. (Norwegian Armed Forces Museum)

The armies that faced the onslaught of the German Wehrmacht between the epic but doomed defence of Poland in September 1939, and the fall of France and the defeat of the British Expeditionary Force in May–June 1940, are often unjustly ignored by historians of World War II. Their resistance, inevitably brief, tends to be dismissed in a few sentences, and they are sometimes regarded simply as 'victims'. The title of this book is deliberately chosen; these armies may have been doomed by the hugely disproportionate numbers and equipment that they faced, but many of their soldiers fought as well as was practically possible, and they deserve to be remembered among Hitler's 'enemies'. (The commentaries to the colour plates in this book identify, where possible, units that distinguished themselves in action.) The patriotic spirit that prompted thousands of the survivors to make more or less perilous journeys to Britain, in order to carry on the fight in lonely exile, did not spring from thin air.

In the interwar years the small populations, modest wealth and national cultures of these countries had usually prevented them from maintaining significant armed forces or acquiring up-to-date equipment. They were also lulled into at least an uneasy mood of security by German diplomatic duplicity after the Nazi Party came to power in 1933. Denmark had a non-aggression pact with Germany, and Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg had all declared their neutrality. In 1940 this status, which made it impossible for them to discuss well in advance joint defensive planning with France and Britain, was to be violated by Germany with ruthless cynicism and by means of overwhelming force.

The Wehrmacht crushed both Denmark and tiny Luxembourg in a few hours each; but the Netherlands resisted for five days, Belgium for 18 days, and Norway fought on beside the Allies for two full months, and inflicted three times as many German casualties as Norway suffered. The monarchs and governments of Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands escaped to Britain to keep the flags of national sovereignty flying in exile, denying the subsequent German puppet regimes any legitimacy and keeping the spirit of resistance alive. (While a Belgian government in exile was also established in London, King Leopold's decision to share his people's occupation as a symbol of unity, in a country comprising two different language communities, was a further complication.)

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DENMARK

Two Danish officers in M1923 khaki service uniform. Both wear the characteristic Danish 'tent hat' with light brown piping and wide braid and the red-and-silver officers' cockade, the officers' open-collar tunic, riding breeches and brown leather riding boots. The officer at right wears a privately-purchased civilian raincoat without rank insignia, a brown leather belt with cross-brace, and a map case suspended at his left hip; his companion wears a dress dagger in his sword frog. (Chakoten: Danish Society for Military History)

Organization

Under the Defence Act of 7 May 1937 the Danish Army *(den Danske Hær)* had 14,550 personnel, with cadre staffs training annually 6,000 conscripts for 11 months' military service – an inadequate strength even in peacetime. Despite intense lobbying by the commander, LtGen Wilhelm Prior, the Danish government, which had naïvely signed the German-Danish Non-Aggression Pact of 31 May 1939, refused to increase army strength for fear of provoking Germany. The Army had a **General Staff** and seven combat branches:

Infantry: 8 regiments – Life Guards, 6 infantry, 1 bicycle infantry; plus infantry pioneers, and the Bornholm Defence Force. **Cavalry**: 2 regiments – Guards Hussars and Jutland Dragoons. **Artillery**: 3 field and 1 AA regiments. **Engineers**: 1 regiment and 1 signals battalion. **Transport**: 1 battalion. **Army Technical Corps (HTK)**. **Air Service**: 2 battalions. Also: **Administration, Medical, and Veterinary** services. The units were grouped under Army HQ, 1st Zealand Division (MajGen Rolsted) and 2nd Jutland Division (MajGen Essemann).

A 5,000-strong **infantry regiment** comprised an HQ with supply and ammunition columns; HQ company, with signals, AA, reconnaissance, and engineer detachments, medical personnel, supply and ammunition columns; a regimental gun company; 3x 1,469-strong line and 1 reinforcement battalions, each with an HQ, 4x 230-strong 'light machine gun companies', and a heavy weapons company with HMGs, mortars and AA guns. The 1,800-strong 6th Bicycle Infantry Regiment had an HQ company, 2x 788-strong bicycle battalions (each with 3 bicycle and 1 motorcycle companies), 2 reinforcement battalions, and a heavy weapons company. The Life Guards comprised an HQ and 3 battalions; Bornholm Island's Defence Force had 7 reserve infantry companies. The **Infantry Pioneer Command** had 2x 1,000-strong mobile battalions, each with 3 bicycle and 1 motorcycle companies, for border-defence duties such as destroying roads and light demolitions. Of the **cavalry**, the Guards Hussar Regt had 8 company-size squadrons – 2 mounted, 2 cyclist, 1 each motorcyclist, rifle, heavy weapons, and armoured car (one armoured car platoon with 3x Swedish Landsverk Lynx PV M39 vehicles, and a motorcycle platoon). The Jutland Dragoon Regt had no rifle squadron, and its armoured car squadron awaited vehicles. An **artillery** regiment had 3–4 battalions each of 3 batteries; the AA regiment had 3 battalions each with 3 batteries. The **engineer** regiment comprised

Table 1: Danish Army selected battle order 1 November 1937–9 April 1940

Army HQ (Copenhagen)
General Staff; HQ & 10 Bn, AA Regt; Eng Regt (HQ; Sig Bn – 8 Radio Co; 7, 10 & 11 Telegraph Cos); Air Service; Bornholm Defence Force; Transport Bn

1 Zealand Division (Copenhagen)
Life Guards (1–3 Bns, band); 1 Inf Regt (1, 15 & 21 Bns; 24 Reinforcement Bn); 4 Inf Regt (8, 11 & 17 Bns; 28 Rfmt Bn); 5 Inf Regt (7, 14 & 19 Bns; 25 Rfmt Bn); Hussar Guards Regt (1 & 2 Cav Sqns; 1 & 2 Bicycle Sqns; 3 Bicycle (M'cycle) Sqn; Rifle Sqn; Heavy Weapons Sqn; Armoured Car Sqn); 1 Art Regt (1 & 2 Reserve & 6 Bns); 2 Art Regt (4, 5, 11 & 12 Bns); 13 Bn, AA Regt; 1 Eng Bn (1–3 Cos)

2 Jutland Division (Viborg)
2 Inf Regt (3, 13 & 18 Bns; 22 Rfmt Bn); 3 Inf Regt (6, 9 & 20 Bns; 23 Rfmt Bn); 6 Bicycle Infantry Regt (4 & 5 Bicycle Bns; 16 & 26 Rfmt Bns); 7 Inf Regt (2, 10 & 12 Bns; 27 Rfmt Bn); Pioneer Command (1 & 2 Bns); Jutland Dragoon Regt (1 & 2 Cav Sqns; 1–3 Bicycle Sqns; Hvy Wpns Sqn; Armd Car Sqn); 3 Art Regt (3, 7–9 Bns); 14 Bn, AA Regt; 2 Eng Bn (4–6 Cos)

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2 battalions with 6 engineer companies, and the **signals** battalion 3 telegraph ('engineer') companies and a radio company.

The **Army Air Service** *(Hærens Flyvertropper) had* 4 squadrons with 52 largely obsolete aircraft. There was a 4,300-strong **Royal Danish Navy** *(Kongelige Danske Marine),* commanded by VAdm Hjalmar Rechnitzer.

Combat history

The 'War of 9 April 1940' began at 04.15hrs that morning, when German XXXI Corps attacked Denmark under Operation *Weserübung*. Armoured cars, tanks and motorcycles formed flying columns, while 1st Parachute Regt, in the first combat drop in history, secured Aalborg and the Storstrøm Bridge on Falster island. The Danish government did not order mobilization, and, against Gen Prior's advice, surrendered at 06.00; armed resistance ended at 08.15.

Jutland Division had built roadblocks on the southern border, defended by infantry guns, AT guns and light machine guns. 4th Bicycle Bn (HQ Søgaard) divided into 12 detachments of 28–130 men. Lundtoftebjerg Detachment's AT platoon disabled two German armoured cars and a tank, while the bicycle platoon fought tanks and dive-bombers. Hokkerup Det knocked out three armoured cars, and Bjægskov fought off armoured cars and tanks. 1st Company's Bredevad Det disabled three armoured cars, and Korskro Det defended Rabsted. Meanwhile 3rd Company's Gaardeby Det engaged armoured cars, and 5th Inf Bn also offered resistance.

The Haderslev roadblock in eastern Jutland comprised the 3rd Inf Bn and 1st Battery, 8th Artillery Battalion. The Heavy Company's AT gun knocked out three tanks, and at another roadblock a soldier died whilst single-handedly manning an infantry gun. Other Haderslev units resisted until 08.15, destroying two tanks. The Tønder garrison in western Jutland comprised the infantry gun and bicycle platoons of the Pioneer Command's NCO School, and 1st Pioneer Bn's 4th Company. They destroyed four armoured cars at the Abild and Sølsted roadblocks, retreating from dive-bomber attack to Bredebro. 14th Infantry Battalion fought at Sønderbro, and two batteries of 14th AA Bn shot down a bomber.

On Zealand, the Life Guards Training Company defended the Amalienborg royal palace; 11th Inf Bn took the ferry to Sweden, where some later formed a Danish Brigade. Admiral Rechnitzer surrendered the Navy without firing a shot. German fighter-bombers attacked Værløse

LEFT **A Danish infantry MG section; the soldiers wear M1938 light grey sidecaps with or without national cockades, M1910 black greatcoats over M1915 light grey tunics and trousers, and M1930 black leather boots. They have M1888 belts, support straps, single M1906 ammunition pouches, M1915 bayonets and M1869 entrenching tools. M1923 helmets are strapped to their M1939 backpacks, and all carry ammunition for the section's 8mm M1924 Madsen light machine gun, here mounted for sustained fire. They are armed with 7.92mm M1898 Krag-Jørgensen rifles. (Chakoten: Danish Society for Military History)**

RIGHT **A detachment of Danish motorcycle troops, probably from an Infantry Pioneer Command battalion; all wear M1923 helmets. The Nimbus MC motorcyclists (first & second right) wear the brown motorcyclist/AFV overall (see Plate B3), with black M1888 belts and support straps and single M1906 ammunition pouches. The sidecar passengers, operating the mounted 8mm M1929 Madsen MG, are wearing infantry M1915 grey field uniforms under M1910 black greatcoats (see Plate A3). Motorcycle-sidecar combinations armed with 20mm M1938 Madsen cannon destroyed 11 German armoured cars and two PzKw I tanks, and killed many troops, during Denmark's brief but locally fierce resistance. (Chakoten: Danish Society for Military History)**

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RIGHT **An LMG gunner and a rifleman practising firing drill during an exercise. Both wear M1923 helmets and M1915 grey field uniforms, with light field equipment – note the M1910 black greatcoats rolled on their backs and strapped around their mess tins. (Chakoten: Danish Society for Military History)**

BELOW **1941: a Danish captain wearing M1923 officers' khaki field uniform with M1923 steel helmet. The tunic is worn here with the collar closed and the officers' star, and rank insignia on the shoulder-straps. Note the infantry officers' brown lace-up boots; the belt worn with both cross-braces as support straps; cased binoculars; and a brown canvas magazine pouch for the sub-machine gun slung behind his left shoulder (the Finnish M1931 Suomi was manufactured in Denmark as the M1941 Madsen-Suomi). He has a holstered M1923 Bergmann-Bayard pistol at his right hip, and an M1938 gasmask slung from his right shoulder. (Chakoten: Danish Society for Military History)**

airfield, shooting down one aircraft and destroying or damaging 25 others as they tried to take off.

The Danish public were ashamed of Denmark's surrender after this short resistance, at a cost of 16 killed and wounded for 203 German casualties. The Germans permitted a smaller navy and an army of 3,300 Life Guards and cadre personnel under LtGen Ebbe Gørtz. The occupation was increasingly resented, so when the Germans attempted to occupy army barracks on 29 August 1943 the Danish Army resisted, losing 26 killed. The Life Guard defended Gothesgade and Jægersborg barracks in Copenhagen and Sorgenfri Castle; the Engineer Regt, Ryvangen in Copenhagen; Jutland Division's 6th & 20th Inf Bns, Nyborg and Albanigade in Odense; the Guards Hussars, Næstved, and 4th & 5th Inf Bns engaged the enemy three times at Odense. Meanwhile the Navy, under VAdm Aage Vedel, scuttled 32 ships – virtually the entire fleet. The Danish armed forces were disbanded, but Denmark was now firmly in the Allied camp.

UNIFORMS & INSIGNIA

Officers' service uniform

The M1923 khaki ('yellow-brown') service uniform was introduced on 24 February 1925. Officers wore a superior quality peaked (visored) cap, with a brown leather peak and gold-buckled chinstrap with two bronze standard buttons (i.e. with the Danish coat-of-arms of three lions and nine hearts). An oval red-silver-red national cockade was worn on the crown above a very light brown (practically off-white) silk cap band, with a gold standard button within a gold-embroidered oak wreath on a khaki cloth backing: the wreath's two branches had four leaves for general officers, three leaves for field officers and two for subaltern (company) officers.

The closed-collar service tunic could also be worn open with a khaki shirt and tie. It had 6 bronze standard front buttons, external pleated or unpleated breast pockets and unpleated side pockets, all with square or scalloped buttoned flaps, and plain square buttoned cuffs. Shoulder straps covered with very light brown braid had gold metal rank insignia and branch buttons, and the collars a gold 4-point star for generals and combat branches. Plain khaki riding breeches were worn with M1923

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Table 2: Danish Army selected branch insignia 24 February 1925–29 April 1943

Branch	Collar insignia	Officers' & WOs' spiral-rope branch button	Other ranks' pebbled unit button
General officers	Star	Crown, 3 lions, 9 hearts	-
General Staff officers	Star	Crown, cannon on crossed rifle & sabre on wreath	-
Life Guard Regt/Bns	Star/rosette	Crown, royal cipher 'CRX'	*/(1941) Crown, 1–3LB
Infantry Regt HQs/Bns	Star/rosette	Crown, crossed rifles on spade	Crown, I–VII/ Crown, 1–28
Infantry Pioneer Command/Bns	Star/rosette	As Infantry	ibid*/(1941) Crown, 1–2FP
Guards Hussar Regt (Cavalry)	Star/rosette	Crown, cipher 'CRX'	*
Jutland Dragoon Regt (Cavalry)	Star/rosette	Crown, crossed carbine & sabre	*
Transport Bn	Star/rosette	As Jutland Dragoons	*/Crown, T
Field Artillery Regts/Bns	Star/rosette	Crown, flaming grenade above crossed cannons	Crown, I–III/ Crown, 1– 9, 11, 12
AA Artillery Regt	Star/rosette	As Field Artillery	Crown, 10, 13, 14. (1941) Crown, winged crossed cannons
Engineer Regt/Bns	Star/rosette	Crown, crossed carbine & spade on ring	*/Crown, 1–6
Signals Bn	Star/rosette	As Engineers	(10.5.1926) Crown, isolator, lightning bolts
Army Technical Corps (HTK)	Star/rosette	Crown, flaming grenade above compasses, on crossed rifle & sabre, on cogwheel	*
Air Service HQ/Bns	Star/rosette	(1939) Crown, 3 lions, 9 hearts. (12.5.1943) Crown, winged propeller	(23.1.1934) Crown, winged propeller/Crown, 1–2
Administration	Staff of Mercury	Crown, crossed sabre and Staff of Mercury	*
Medical Corps	Staff of Aesculapius	Crown, crossed sabre and Staff of Aesculapius	*
Veterinary Corps	Staff of Aesculapius on horseshoe	Crown, crossed sabre and Staff of Aesculapius on horseshoe	*

* Same branch badge as the branch button.

brown leather equipment, e.g. riding boots, belt with cross-brace, and a holstered pistol on the right hip, or an M1910 sabre with silver braid sword-knot on the left.

The khaki 'tent hat' had very light brown piping and wide silk braid, and the national cockade. The M1910 black, M1915 light grey, or M1923 khaki superior quality double-breasted overcoats with turn-back cuffs were worn in cold weather.

Enlisted ranks' service uniform

Warrant officers wore the officers' uniform with a much darker brown braid on the peaked cap and tent hat, and a gold collar rosette. Reserve NCOs bought officer-quality khaki uniforms, or wore the issued inferior quality enlisted version; these were worn without collar insignia, the peaked cap having a gilt unit button between two single oak branches. They wore an M1888 black leather belt, and the M1910, M1915, or M1923 enlisted ranks' greatcoat with plain cuffs. Officer cadets wore this uniform but with officers' cap-band silk and tent-hat braid.

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Also photographed in 1941, this corporal wears the M1923 enlisted ranks' khaki uniform with the M1939 lower collar and shoulder reinforcements, and his M1941 rank chevrons have khaki cloth backing. The rolled-up trousers worn over the M1923 brown leather marching boots were a Scandinavian fashion, believed to reflect manliness. He has an M1915 bayonet on his M1923 brown leather waistbelt. (Chakoten: Danish Society for Military History)

A few conscript NCOs and privates, including the Signals Bn and Balloon Park, were issued the M1923 khaki enlisted-quality uniform in the 1930s. It comprised a khaki sidecap with white and red wool national cockade; a tunic, with a shallower collar and shoulder-reinforcements from 1939; rolled trousers, rolled down when walking-out; brown ankle boots; a brown leather belt and bayonet scabbard, and a khaki enlisted greatcoat.

In 1940, however, most enlisted personnel still wore the M1915 light grey service uniform. The tunic had 8 front buttons and cuff and back-flap buttons; branch-colour collar patches and piping on the collar, front, shoulder straps, pointed cuffs and back flaps; and external breast pockets with pointed flaps. Rolled-up trousers were worn with M1930 black leather laced calf-length boots. The M1931 sidecap, M1888 belt, M1915 bayonet, and M1910 or M1915 enlisted greatcoat were also worn. The Life Guards retained their M1903 greyish-green uniform and kepi, and a braid-colour tent-hat tassel.

Field uniform

The service uniform was worn with different headgear and equipment. Officers and WOs wore the M1923 steel helmet painted light brown (from December 1938 sand was mixed in); the M1923 khaki enlisted sidecap with a silver-and-red officers' cockade; and M1923 infantry officers' equipment. Reserve NCOs and lower ranks wore the helmet, M1923 khaki or M1938 light grey sidecap, and infantry equipment. Crews of the Guard Hussars' armoured car squadron wore M1935 black leather jackets.

Rank insignia (see Table 9, page 41)

Officers wore rank insignia on very light brown silk-covered M1923 shoulder straps. Warrant officers were ex-NCOs carrying out special technical and administrative functions, but sometimes acting as deputy commanders of specialized weapons platoons; they ranked with but below corresponding subaltern ranks. They wore rank insignia on dark brown silk-covered shoulder straps. Reserve NCOs wore rank insignia on khaki shoulder straps with dark brown braid; officer cadets, undergoing six months' officer training, had khaki and light brown braid shoulder straps. On tunic and greatcoat cuffs conscript NCOs wore M1923 yellow cotton chevrons (from 1941 on a khaki backing), or M1916 red cloth chevrons.

Branch insignia (see Table 2, page 7)

The M1915 branch-of-service colours were: Infantry and Medical, red; Cavalry and Artillery, crimson; HTK, yellow; Engineers, black; Administration, light blue; and Veterinary, green.

On the M1923 tunic and various greatcoats, officers' and WOs' branch insignia were shown (obviously, too small for easy identification) on gold shoulder-strap buttons with a spiral rope design; Guards regiments wore King Christian X's cipher. Reserve NCOs and lower ranks wore branch insignia with regimental or battalion numbers on a single gold 'unit button' with a pebbled surface, on a coloured cloth backing identifying sub-unit (usually company-level), on the right upper breast. The company-colour backings were: 1st, red; 2nd, white; 3rd, light blue; 4th, yellow; 5th, green; 6th, violet; 7th, black. On the right breast Life Guards officers and WOs wore a gold-embroidered crowned royal cipher, while the HTK wore a crowned 'HTK' in a wreath. A commissioned military engineer wore

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gold-embroidered compasses on a cogwheel on the collar. Other WO and NCO specialists had gold metal collar badges: engineer craftsman – microphone, on crossed axe and saw, on ring; HTK technician – crossed file and hammer on cogwheel; farrier (veterinary) – crossed hammers on horseshoe. Personnel seconded as Military Police wore on the left upper sleeve a blue armlet with two black inner edgings.

Front and rear views of an infantry private; although taken in 1941, they show many features of the 1940 field gear. He wears the M1923 helmet, M1923/39 enlisted ranks' tunic, M1923 trousers and marching boots. The M1923 brown waistbelt, with support straps for his M1939 backpack, has a single ammo pouch for his Krag-Jørgensen rifle, and an M1915 bayonet and M1869 entrenching tool on his left hip. The rear view shows his M1923 khaki greatcoat strapped to his backpack, above the M1938 gasmask canister, and an M1895 water bottle behind his right hip. (Chakoten: Danish Society for Military History)

NORWAY

Organization

The partially mobilized Army *(Den Norske Hær)* had 25,000 men on 8 April 1940, expandable to 118,500 on full mobilization. The Minister of Defence, MajGen Ljungberg, the Army commander, MajGen Kristian Laake (replaced 11 April 1940 by Col Otto Ruge, immediately promoted major-general), and the General Staff constituted the Armed Forces GHQ. All males aged 18 were liable for military service, thereafter being liable for mobilization while aged 21–32 in front-line units *(Linje)*, 33–44 in the territorials *(Landvern)*, and 45–55 in the home guard *(Landstorm)*. Only two-thirds of recruits were called up, and 84 days' recruit and 30 days' unit training was unrealistically short. There was a **General Staff** and nine branches of service:

Infantry: 16 regiments and 3 battalions. **Cavalry**: 3 dragoon regiments, plus 1 motorized MG and 6 bicycle companies. **Artillery**: 3 field and 1 AA regiments; 2 heavy and 3 mountain battalions, plus coastal artillery. **Engineers**: 1 regiment and 2 battalions, plus 6 engineer, 1 bridging and 6 signals companies. **Medical Corps**: 6 companies; 2 base and 13 motorized field hospitals. **Veterinary Corps**: 6 detachments. **Transport**: 7 motor companies, 6 ammunition columns and 6 ration supply detachments. **Supply**: 6 companies. **Air Service**: 1 regiment.

In 1916, Norway was divided into six military districts: 1st, South-East; 2nd, East; 3rd, South;

This Norwegian captain in barracks is wearing the M1934 officers' service uniform with breeches and dismounted officers' laced boots. As duty officer he wears from a brown leather strap a silvered gorget with a gold Norwegian lion motif, and the M1906 officers' sword with gold and dark blue sword-knot. The qualification badges above his left breast pocket, including marksmanship and marching proficiency, suggest that he is a commissioned former senior NCO. (Norwegian Armed Forces Museum)

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Norwegian troops mobilizing at Trøndelag, wearing a wide variety of uniforms and equipment. Captain Evjen (rear view, left foreground) wears a British Mk 1 helmet and an enlisted man's greatcoat. Lieutenant Steinvig (second from right, foreground) has an M1934 kepi and an officers' light grey service greatcoat – note the piped half-belt at the rear; and 2nd Lt Østlie (background, above Capt Evjen) wears an M1934 ski-cap and a private-purchase civilian leather coat. The enlisted men are wearing a mixture of British and Baltic helmets, M1934 kepis, M1914 and M1934 winter caps; both M1914 and M1934 field uniforms can be seen, with leggings and full field equipment, and they carry the standard 6.5mm M1894 Krag-Jørgensen rifle. Many of these men would later form the garrison that held out for three weeks at Hegra Fortress under Capt Evjen's command. (Norwegian Armed Forces Museum)

4th, West; 5th, Central; and 6th, North. Each district's forces comprised a division (see Table 3, opposite), which mobilized one brigade. On 30 April 1940, 6th Division also formed the understrength 7th Field Bde in Finnmark, from units mobilized in October 1939 to oppose any Soviet incursion from Finland. Divisional peacetime strength rarely reached 3,000 even in April 1940, and only 6th Div reached the wartime establishment of 12,000 men.

An M1936 **brigade** comprised infantry and field artillery regiments (or mountain artillery battalions); cavalry bicycle, engineer and signals companies; and medical, veterinary, transport and supply services. A 3,750-man **infantry regiment** had an HQ 2 active and 1 territorial battalions. A 516-strong **battalion** had HQ, MG, and 3x 181-strong rifle companies; a **rifle company** had transport and 4x 38-man rifle platoons, each with 4 sections. A divisional **dragoon regiment** had an HQ and 6 company-size **squadrons**: MG, motorized MG, mortar, 1–2 bicycle and 1–2x 201-man rifle squadrons, each rifle squadron having 3x 43-strong platoons. The 1st Dragoons operated an experimental platoon of the Swedish Landsverk L-120 light 'national tank', and three improvised armoured cars; none saw action.

A 1,136-man **artillery regiment** had an HQ battery and 2 battalions, each with an HQ, field and howitzer batteries. A 471-man mountain artillery battalion comprised an HQ and 2 mountain batteries. The **AA regiment** had 24 batteries, plus 12–14 AAMG platoons allocated to the coast artillery and eight inland forts. The 940-strong **Army Air Service** *(Hærens Flyvåpen)* had 52 mostly obsolete biplanes in one regiment with three wings, commanded by Capt Øen. The 7,000-man **Royal Norwegian Navy** *(Kongelig Norske Marine)* had 121 ships, under RAdm Diesen.

Combat history

Germany planned to invade Norway to secure strategic Swedish iron-ore supplies. However, on 5 February 1940 the Allies agreed an expedition to cut this supply line; and on 16 February the British Royal Navy boarded the German supply-ship *Altmark* in Norwegian waters, to free British prisoners held aboard. The German invasion, part of Operation *Weserübung*, involved a dangerous sea crossing, the largest German amphibious operation of World War II.

On 7 April 1940 six warship groups escorted ships transporting *Gruppe XXI* with three, later seven, divisions. The Groups disembarked on 9 April after two days of atrocious weather and sporadic Royal Navy attacks. From 14 April, 38,000 British, French and Free Polish forces arrived in 'Mauriceforce', 'Sickleforce' and 'Rupertforce'. Meanwhile the Luftwaffe maintained air superiority and the German 1st Parachute Regt occupied Sola and Fornebu airfields. The Norwegian Fighter and Bomber Wings resisted until 26 April.

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Table 3: Norwegian Army selected battle order 9 April–10 June 1940

Army HQ (Oslo)
General Staff; 1 & 2 Heavy Art Bns; AA Regt HQ; Eng Regt HQ & Bridging Eng Co; 1 & 2 Base Hospitals
1 Division (Halden)
1 Field Brigade (2 Jegerkorpset & 3 Telemark Inf Regts; 1 Bicycle Co; 1 Akershus Art Regt; 1 Eng & Sig Cos; 1, 7 Mot Fld Hsptls; services*); 1 Østfold Inf Regt; 1 Akershus Dragoon Regt; 7 Mot Transport Co
2 Division (Hamar)
2 Fld Bde (5 Østoppland & 6 Vestoppland Inf Regts; 2 Bicycle Co; 2 Oppland Art Regt; 2 Eng & Sig Cos; 2, 8 Mot Fld Hsptls; services); Royal Guard Bn; 4 Akershus Inf Regt; 2 Oppland Dragoon Regt
3 Division (Kristiansand)
3 Fld Bde (8 Rogaland Inf Regt; 3 Bicycle Co; 1 Mtn Art Bn; 3 Eng & Sig Cos; 3, 9 Mot Fld Hsptls; services); 7 Agder Inf Regt; Mot MG Co
4 Division (Bergen)
4 Fld Bde (10 Sogn og Fjordane Inf Regt; 4, 8 Bicycle Cos; 2 Mtn Art Bn; 4 Eng & Sig Cos; 4, 10 Mot Fld Hsptls; services); 9 Hordaland Inf Regt
5 Division (Trondheim)
5 Fld Bde (13 Nord-Trøndelag & 14 Sør-Hálogaland Inf Regts; 5 Bicycle Co; 3 Trøndelag Art Regt; 5 Eng Bn (5 Eng & Sig Cos); 5, 11 Mot Fld Hsptls; services); 11 Møre & 12 Sør-Trøndelag Inf Regts; 3 Trøndelag Dragoon Regt
6 Division (Harstad)
6 Fld Bde (16 Troms Inf Regt; 9 Mot Art Bty; 6 Eng Bn (6 Eng & Sig Cos); 6, 12, 13 Mot Fld Hsptls; services); 7 Fld Bde (Alta & Varanger Inf Bns; 3 Mtn Art Bn; 10 Mot Art Bty); 15 Nord-Hálogaland Inf Regt; Independent Eng Co

Note: * 1–6 Brigade services comprised six units each with the brigade number: Medical Co, Veterinary Detachment, Transport (Motor Transport Co, Ration Supply Co, Ammunition Column); Horsedrawn Supply Co.

The Kriegsmarine 5th Group landed troops at Oslo, under fire from Oslofjord and Oscarsborg coastal artillery, which sunk the flagship cruiser *Blücher*, but MajGen Haug's Norwegian 2nd Div offered minimal resistance. On 9–10 April the Royal Guards' 1st Hvy Wpns Co prevented paratroopers capturing King Haakon, the Norwegian cabinet and GHQ at Midtskogen Farm near Elverum. On 14 April, German forces advanced along the strategic Gudbrandsdal valley towards Trondheim. 2nd Div returned fire, and 6th Inf Regt counter-attacked at Haugsbygd (15 April). The 1st Art and 1st Inf regiments from MajGen Erichsen's 3,000-strong 1st Div attacked at Askrim (12–13 April), but the following day Erichsen evacuated into Sweden, leaving 300 troops of the 3rd Telemark Inf Regt to resist German forces at Vinjesvingen (3–5 May).

The Kriegsmarine 6th Group disembarked troops at Egersund, while 4th Group landed forces at Kristiansand under coastal artillery fire, although the 2,000-strong 3rd Div (MajGen Liljedal) surrendered on 15 April at Setesdal without fighting. The German 3rd Group landed troops at Bergen and Stavanger against artillery fire, but both towns surrendered. Meanwhile MajGen Steffens mobilized 6,361 men of 4th Div at Voss, blocking the German advance from Bergen. When Voss was occupied (26 April) Steffens retreated to Førde, and surrendered on 1 May.

The Kriegsmarine 2nd Group landed troops at Trondheim, taking the town from MajGen Luntzon's 5th Division. The Allied Mauriceforce landed at Namsos (14 April), and Sickleforce at Åndalsnes (18 April). The Norwegian 5th and 11th Inf Regts defeated paratroopers at Dombås (14–19 April). German troops forced Sickleforce and Mauriceforce into retreat; they withdrew by sea on 2 May, leaving 5th Div to demobilize. However, almost 400 troops, many from 3rd Art Regt, held out at Hegra Fortress from 15 April to 5 May.

A signals unit takes a break in eastern Norway in mid-April 1940. The lieutenant (right) is wearing service uniform with a kepi; the double-breasted coat may be a regulation dark grey or khaki raincoat, or a private purchase. The signallers are wearing M1894 dark blue greatcoats with M1914 winter caps, and brown leather belt equipment. (Norwegian Armed Forces Museum)

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Defenders of Hegra Fortress in Trøndelag, central Norway, displaying a wide variety of uniforms. The officer (sitting, right foreground) is wearing an M1934 officers' ski-cap and greatcoat with officers' field equipment and leggings. His corporal (standing, left of second row) has an M1914 field tunic with cuff rank insignia; see Plate C2. The men wear British Mk 1 helmets or M1914 winter caps, with M1894 dark blue and M1914 greenish-grey greatcoats. (Norwegian Armed Forces Museum)

The German Navy's 1st Group disembarked most of Gen Dietl's 3rd Mountain Div at Narvik, but MajGen Carl Fleischer mobilized his 12,000-man 6th Div in time. Rupertforce landed at Harstad (15 April–5 May), but the Norwegian 12th and 15th Inf Regts and Alta Bn were defeated at Gratangen (23–25 April). Rupertforce attacked Narvik on 24 April, forcing Dietl out on the 28th, but embarked for home on 8 June. 6th Div surrendered on 10 June, although the Germans allowed Alta and Varanger Bns to garrison Finnmark against the Soviet threat until August. Norway had fought for 62 days, suffering 1,700 casualties and inflicting 5,300.

UNIFORMS & INSIGNIA

M1914 service uniform

This was designed in 1902 in a greenish 'mountain-grey' with red piping, and entered service in 1910. The officers' kepi had a flared crown, black leather peak, black leather chinstrap (gold for general officers) with button-colour buckle and two small branch-colour buttons. There were two narrow button-colour braid seam-stripes up the sides, and braid rank rings on the band. On the front a large red silk national cockade edged white-blue-white was fixed, above a medium red enamel button edged gold with a gold Norwegian lion-and-axe motif. The tunic had a closed, piped collar; a fly front concealing 6 buttons; external pleated breast and waist pockets with scalloped buttonless flaps; square, piped cuffs, and no shoulder straps. Piped riding breeches were worn with black leather riding boots and silver spurs. The M1922 brown leather belt had a cross-brace and a frog for the M1906 officers' sword, with a gold and dark blue silk sword-knot.

The light grey woollen double-breasted greatcoat had two rows of 6 grey branch buttons; a distinctive internal left breast pocket (sometimes omitted), with a square flap fastened by the third left-hand button; two internal waist pockets with square buttonless flaps; piped collar and shoulder straps with rank insignia; piped turn-back cuffs, and two piped martingales (rear half-belts) fastened by two buttons. The M1932 dark grey double-breasted raincoat had no piping, leather buttons, and shoulder-strap rank insignia. Trousers and shoes replaced breeches, riding boots and belts for undress and walking-out. With no motorcycle troops and only four AFVs, Norway had not developed protective clothing for motorized personnel.

Infantrymen of the Norwegian 6th Div fighting a desperate rearguard action on the Narvik front at Gratangen, 23–25 April. The three men are wearing regulation or privately-purchased civilian double-breasted wind jackets over their field tunics. The officer firing the Madsen has an M1934 officers' winter cap; his two men wear the enlisted ranks' version with earflaps tied up. (Norwegian Armed Forces Museum)

Career NCOs wore the officers' uniform; their kepi had two narrow red

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cotton vertical seam-stripes, and a tricolour cockade and bright branch-colour button. The more junior ranks wore a rougher-quality uniform. Their kepi had one red cotton seam-stripe, and a tricolour cockade and dull branch-colour button. The tunic was worn with a plain brown leather belt with grey metal buckle, piped trousers, and black leather ankle boots. The M1894 greatcoat was still common, cut like the M1914 greatcoat but in dark blue cloth with wide, red-piped collars, plain turn-back cuffs and shoulder straps, and two rows of 6 branch-colour buttons.

M1914 field uniform

Officers could wear the enlisted field uniform, but usually preferred their service uniform with trousers and black ankle boots. The British M1916 Mk 1 helmet (introduced 1917), and the Swedish M1931 'Baltic' helmet (introduced 7 April 1931) were both worn, painted greenish-grey. A black lambswool peakless cap had the kepi insignia, with the cockade and button joined by double kepi braids on a mountain-grey backing.

Most enlisted men wore the M1914 'Finnmark' winter cap, its deep earflaps secured by brown horn buttons, with an enamel national cockade. The tunic, cut loose enough for a sweater underneath, had collar and cuff piping, a fly front, two external breast pockets, and waist pockets with pointed buttonless flaps (the summer cotton tunic had no breast pockets). Piped trousers were worn with black ankle boots. The rough-quality greatcoat was of officer pattern but with two rows of 5 buttons and plain piped cuffs.

Major S.F. Hermansen (left) and an unidentified Norwegian captain, probably his adjutant, photographed during the Norwegian campaign. Both are wearing the M1934 uniform with officers' ski-cap and cap badges (see Plate D1). Hermansen wears the standard M1914 infantry officers' equipment with trousers and ski-leggings; his companion has a regulation double-breasted wind jacket over his field tunic, and carries a rucksack and map case. (Norwegian Armed Forces Museum)

M1934 service and field uniform

The officers' uniform introduced 12 May 1934 was a medium 'mountain-grey' with green piping, and a light grey greatcoat. All buttons were silver or dull grey; kepi rank rings, field officers' collar braids and greatcoat shoulder-strap edging were silver wire (gold for general officers and coast artillery). The M1934 officers' tunic had 6 visible front buttons and buttoned breast pockets and cuffs, piping on the collar and pointed cuffs, and two green stripes on riding breeches and trousers. Most officers adopted the M1934 clothing or remodelled their M1914 items with green trim. The M1934 officers' ski-cap had green piping and fleece-cap insignia above the peak, and M1934 winter caps had deep earflaps and an enamel national cockade. A greenish-grey Norwegian lion badge on a metal disc was added to steel helmets in 1935.

NCOs and privates wore green kepi braids and cuff rank insignia. The M1934 enlisted ranks' tunic had an unpiped collar and pointed cuffs, and shoulder straps were only piped for walking-out. The M1934 summer tunic (with shoulder straps), greatcoat, breeches and trousers had no piping. The M1934 winter cap had earflaps tied over the crown by canvas tapes.

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Soldiers of the 6th Div take a badly needed rest somewhere north of Gratangen. They are wearing Army-issue snow smocks and trousers over their M1914 winter caps and greenish-grey field uniforms, and under standard infantry equipment. (Norwegian Armed Forces Museum)

Rank insignia (see Table 10, page 42)

On the M1914 uniform the kepi rank rings were, for general officers, a wide gold ring; for field officers, 1 medium and 3-1 narrow matt gold or silver (button-colour) rings; for subaltern officers, 3-1 narrow rings; and for NCOs, 3-1 narrow red rings. Officers wore rank stars and braid on tunic collar and greatcoat shoulder straps, and NCOs 3-1 medium red woollen cuff rings. In 1930 the career NCO corps was abolished, and NCOs ranking as *Kommandersersjant*, *Furer* and *Sersjant* were commissioned to *Kaptein*, *Løytnant* and *Fenrik* respectively, although some 'old sweats' refused. Thus conscript *Sersjant* was the only NCO rank in 1940.

General officers kept their M1914 rank insignia on the M1934 grey uniform, but field and subaltern officers adopted matt silver kepi-rings, stars and edging braid; only the coast artillery had matt gold. NCOs and privates wore M1914 cuff insignia in green, and some wore a red woollen crown on a dark blue cloth square on the left upper sleeve to indicate extra responsibilities: Royal Guards, corporal; Infantry, reserve NCO; Cavalry, patrol leader; Artillery, observer. Marksmen wore a gold, silver or bronze badge showing the Norwegian coat-of-arms (lion on a crowned shield) above a wreathed oval with crossed rifle and machine gun, on red ribbon.

Branch insignia (see Table 4, page 14)

Branch insignia were worn on gold or silver buttons on M1894 ceremonial kepis, tunics and greatcoats; on M1914 kepis and greatcoats; and on the grey-painted buttons of M1934 kepis, tunics and greatcoats – which made branch identification difficult at any distance. Regimental adjutants, regimental supply officers and quartermasters wore a single button-colour (1934, silver) aiguillette.

Table 4: Norwegian Army branch insignia 12 May 1934–10 June 1940

Branch	Branch badge on button	Button colour, M1914 uniform	Branch colour
General officers & General Staff officers	Crossed batons in wreath, leaf edging	Gold	Bright red
Infantry (incl. Royal Guard)	Lion with axe, grooved button	Silver	Bright red
Cavalry	Horn within sunburst	Silver	Crimson
Artillery (incl. Coast Artillery)	Sunburst	Gold	Crimson
Engineers	Helmet and breastplate, grooved button	Silver	Light blue
Medical Corps	Greek cross, grooved button	Gold	Madder-red
Veterinary Corps	Horse's head above crossed sabre & Staff of Aesculapius on plain disc, grooved button	Gold	Crimson
Transport	Wagon wheel, grooved button	Gold	Crimson
Supply	Star on sunburst, grooved button	Gold	Crimson
Army Air Corps	Crown above propeller and engine, leaf edging, grooved button	Silver	Green

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LUXEMBOURG

Organization

Wedged between Belgium, France and Germany, the tiny Grand Duchy maintained an armed force inadequate even for its 300,000 population. The *Corps des Gendarmes et Volontaires* was formed on 16 February 1881 with two separate companies (although French, German and a local dialect are all spoken in Luxembourg, for reasons of space we stick to French in this text). It was reorganized on 24 February 1939 under Maj-Cdt Emile Speller, with Prince Félix, husband of the Grand Duchesss Charlotte, as honorary colonel.

Men of the Luxembourg Volunteer Company, wearing M1923 khaki winter field uniform. Over the service tunic they wear the enlisted ranks' greatcoat with two rows of 7 gilt buttons, a plain collar, shoulder straps, turn-back cuffs with rank chevrons, two internal waist pockets with square buttonless flaps, and 4-button rear half-belts. Note the Belgian brown leather belts with 'snake' clasps. The Volunteers also had a white two-piece fatigue uniform, worn with a French-style khaki sidecap with red piping on the flap. (MNHM Diekirch/Alphonse Dauphin Collection)

The *Compagnie des Volontaires*, under Capt A. Jacoby, had 6 officers and 294 other ranks, augmented from 15 September 1939 by a 125-man Auxiliary Volunteer Corps. This total of 425 personnel was divided into a 40-man band, and rifle platoons subdivided into 8–12 man sections. Unmarried men aged 18–25 could volunteer for 4–8 years' military service. The *Compagnie de Gendarmerie Royal Grand-Ducale* comprised career policemen, with a captain-commandant, 12 other officers and 255 other ranks. Luxembourg's armed strength was thus almost 700 men, equivalent to a battalion.

Combat history

In early 1940 the 'Schuster Line' was built, a network of 41 steel gates fixed to concrete blocks: 18 bridgeblocks and 18 roadblocks on the German border, and five roadblocks facing France.

Germany's Low Countries offensive, Operation *Gelb*, commenced during the night of 9–10 May 1940 when German paramilitaries attacked the blocks. At 03.15hrs the steel gates were closed, and at 04.35 tanks of XIX Motorized Corps invaded central Luxembourg. The Volunteer

10 April 1940: four Luxembourg volunteers and two gendarmes guard the Moerstroff roadblock. They are (left to right): *Soldats de 2e classe Gros* and Haas; *Gendarme de 2e classe* Schmitz; *Brigadier* (Gendarmerie corporal) Giwer; and *Soldats de 2e classe* Weidenhaupt and Ludwig. All wear white 'neutrality bands' round their helmets (see Plate D3), which are painted brown for volunteers and black for gendarmes. Schmitz is wearing a dark blue greatcoat, Giwer a service tunic with breeches; both gendarmes have black belts with a single ammunition pouch, and black leather leggings. (MNHM Diekirch/SHA Collection)

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Company was confined to St Esprit barracks in Luxembourg City, leaving only gendarmes and some individual volunteers to defend the blocks. French First Army units briefly entered Luxembourg, but by evening the country was under German occupation. Luxembourg was effectively annexed on 2 August 1940, and in December the 461-strong Volunteer Company became Training Battalion (L) of the German Police.

Uniforms & insignia

Volunteers wore khaki uniforms introduced on 14 May 1923, with red piping and gilt buttons bearing a lion on a crowned shield. The officers' kepi had a black patent leather peak; gold braid chinstrap with gilt buttons showing the grand-ducal cipher of a crowned double 'C'; four gold wire vertical seam-stripes, and gold rank rings. The closed-collar pocketless service tunic had a piped collar with a diagonal gold wire grenade; 8 buttons down a piped front; gold braid epaulette-loops; piped square cuffs with 2 buttons; cuff rank bars, and two piped, buttoned rear half-belts. The field officers had 6-4 rank bars, subaltern officers 3-1. Piped breeches or trousers were worn with black or brown leather riding boots, or leggings with ankle boots.

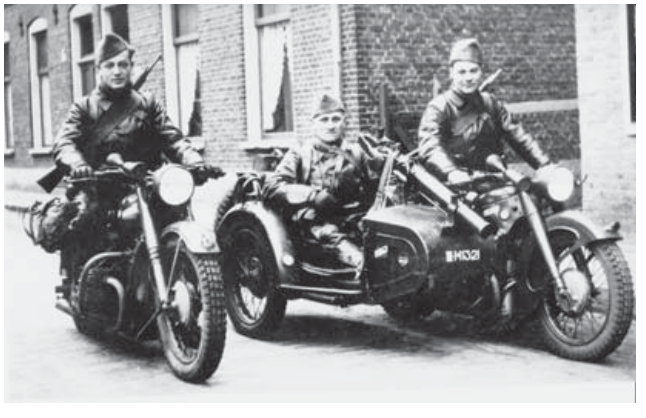
Warrant officers, NCOs and enlisted men wore respectively gold/red, gold or red kepi seam-stripes and rank rings; gold wire collar grenades (enlisted men, brass); and piped trousers. A warrant officer *(adjudant)* and NCOs *(sergent-major, sergent)* wore 3-1 medium gold braid cuff chevrons, a *caporal* red woollen chevrons on both cuffs, a *soldat de première classe* a single red chevron on the left cuff.

The gendarmes wore a dark blue kepi, and a four-pocket service tunic with silver braid, plaited shoulder cords, buttons, and horizontal collar grenades, with light blue piping. Officers wore 3-1 cuff chevrons or bars, other ranks 3-1 chevrons.

THE NETHERLANDS

Organization

General Izaak Reynders was replaced on 6 February 1940 as commander-in-chief by Gen Henri Winkelman. The Royal Netherlands Army *(Koninklijke Nederlandse Landmacht)*, under LtGen Herman Baron van Voorst tot Voorst, mobilized 280,000 troops. From 1922 males aged 18 served for 5½ months, doubled to 11 months from April 1938, before joining the reserve. There was a **General Staff** and 11 branches of service: **Infantry**: 48 regiments – Grenadiers, Light Infantry, 1–46; 24 border battalions – Grenadiers, Lt Inf, 1–22; 21 reserve border companies – Grenadiers, Lt Inf, 1, 2, 4–6, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 21, 34, 38, 39, 45; 2, 4–6 South Limburg; bicycle regiments 1 & 2; 22 MG companies – 1–21, Lt Div. **Cavalry**: 5 regiments – 1–5 Hussars; plus 1 & 2 Hussar Motorcycle regts, 1 & 2 Armoured Car squadrons.



Members of a Hussar Motorcycle Regt at Apeldoorn, circa 1939. All wear the M1931 enlisted ranks' sidecap, and M1917 short black leather coat and breeches; they carry the New Model No.1 carbine with two-piece sling. The motorcycles are BMW R12s, one with a sidecar. (M. Talens)

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Artillery: 22 regiments – 1–20, 22, 23; plus 4 battalions – 24–27; 21 Motorized Regt; coast regiment; AA Corps with 1 & 2 Regts; 56 batteries – 1–23, 76–78, 101–116, 151–164; AAMG Cos 1–14. **Engineers**: 4 regiments incl. 1st Engineers/Railway, 2nd Signals, 3rd Pontoon/Torpedo. **Military Police**: 5 companies – I–V. **Transport**: 8 companies – 1–5, Peel, A & B Bdes; 7 motor battalions – I–VI, Light. **Supply**: 4 regiments – 1–4; **Military Administration**. **Medical Corps**: 4 battalions – 1–4. **Veterinary Corps**: 4 platoons – 1–4. **Air Service**: 3 regiments – 1–3.

The Field Army had four corps (I–IV), with eight infantry divisions, the 9,000-man Light Division, the 'Peel' temporary infantry division, and A, B and G temporary brigades. A peacetime **corps** comprised HQ troops and 2 infantry divisions. A **division** had HQ troops, 3 first-line infantry and 1 field artillery regiments (but Peel Division comprised five 'defence sectors'). The Light Div's reorganization (1 May 1940) to 2 bicycle, 2 motorcycle and 1 horse artillery regiments was only partially completed. Zealand Command and three Military Districts (TBs) – Friesland, Overijssel, South Limburg – deployed units on forward and border fortification lines. 'Fortress Holland' in the western Netherlands, under LtGen van Andel, formed the final redoubt, defended by East Front, West Front, Spui and Kil groups, with I Corps (MajGen Carstens) in strategic reserve. AA Command had three zones: Amsterdam, Rotterdam/Hague and Utrecht/Soesterberg.

A detachment of Dutch military police, all NCOs or corporals, parading in 's-Hertogenbosch. They wear M1927 helmets; M1934 tunics with silver NCOs' or white corporals' chevrons; M1915 trousers, M1912 black leather leggings, and ankle boots (compare with Plate F3). On their left shoulders the NCOs wear the MPs' distinguishing aiguillette in blue and silver, the corporals' in white. All have holstered pistols with black neck lanyards. (Author's collection)

A 2,691-man **first-line infantry regiment** (Grenadiers, Light Infantry, Line numbered 1–22) comprised infantry gun, mortar and anti-tank companies, and 3 **infantry battalions**, each with 3x 184-man rifle companies and a heavy MG company. A **rifle company** had 3–4 platoons, each with 3–4 sections. A 2,200-man **second-line infantry regiment** (23–46) had a lower establishment. A **Hussar regiment** comprised 5x 165-man company-sized **squadrons** (1 & 2 mounted, 3 & 4 bicycle), heavy MG and AT squadrons, and a mortar platoon. A **Hussar motorcycle regiment** had 2x 200-man battalions, an AT company and a mortar platoon. A 2,500-strong **bicycle regiment** comprised 3 battalions, each with 3x 165-man bicycle companies, heavy MG and AT companies, and a mortar platoon. A 176-man **armoured car company** had six Landsverk M1938 (L180) vehicles in three platoons. A 1,800-man **first-line artillery regiment** (numbered 1–8) had 1 howitzer and 2x 3-battery field gun battalions; higher numbered regiments had lower establishments. The 21st Horse Artillery Regt had 2 motorized artillery battalions, each with 2 batteries.

The **Volunteer Home Guard Corps** *(Vrijwillig Landstormkorps* – VLK*)* under MajGen de Jong comprised men aged 19–30 commanded by reserve officers, in six branches: Motor, Shipping, Observer Corps, Railway, and AA and Special VLK for younger men. In the event 42,338 of 97,965 VLK personnel were called up, and also Mobile Columns of

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Table 5: Royal Netherlands Army selected battle order 10–17 May 1940

I Corps
3 Hussar Regt; 1/10 Art Bn; Sig Co; I MP Co; 1 Supply Regt; 1 Transport Bn
1 Div: Grenadiers, Light Inf, 4 Inf Regts; 1 & 13 MG Cos; 2 Art Regt; 1/1 AT Co; 1 AAMG Co; 151 AA Bty; 1 Eng Co; Sig Co
3 Div: 1, 9 & 12 Inf Regts; 3 & 15 MG Cos; 6 Art Regt; 3/1 AT Co; 2 AAMG Co; 152 AA Bty; 3 Eng Co; Sig Co
II Corps
11 Inf Regt; 4 Hussar Regt; 12, 15 & 19 Art Regts; 4 & 7 AAMG Cos; 154 AA Bty; Sig Co; IV MP Co; 2 Supply Regt; 2 Transport Bn
2 Div: 10, 15 & 22 Inf Regts; 2/11 Inf Bn; 2 & 14 MG Cos; 4 Art Regt; 2/8 Art Bn; 2/1 AT Co; 7 AAMG Co; 157 AA Bty; 2 Eng Co; Sig Co
4 Div: 8 & 19 Inf Regts, 1/11 Inf Bn; 4 & 16 MG Cos; 8 Art Regt; 4/1 AT Co; 4 AAMG Co; 4 Eng Co; Sig Co
III Corps
1/29 Inf Bn; 3 & 6 Border Bns; 2 Hussar Regt; 11 Art Regt; Sig Co; III MP Co; 3 Supply Regt; 3 Transport Bn; 3/5 Transport Co
5 Div: 2, 13 & 17 Inf Regts; 5 & 17 MG Cos; 3 Art Regt; 5/1 AT Co; 9 AAMG Co; 159 AA Bty; 5 Eng Co; Sig Co
6 Div: 3, 6 & 14 Inf Regts; 6 & 18 MG Cos; 7 Art Regt; 6/1 AT Co; 5 AAMG Co; 155 AA Bty; 6 Eng Co; Sig Co
Light Div: 1 & 2 Bicycle Regts; 1 & 2 Armd Car Sqns; 2 Hussar M'cycle Regt; MG Co; Horse Art Regt; Supply Bn; Transport Co
Peel Div:
Asten Sector: 2/30, 3/30 & 3/41 Inf Bns; 2 Border Bn. ***Bakel Sector:*** 27 Inf Regt, 1/41 & 3/41 Inf Bns. ***Erp Sector:*** 2/2, 1/13 & 2/17 Inf Bns; 15 Border Bn; 2/20 Art Bn. ***Schaijk Sector:*** 1/3, 1/6, 3/14, 2/26 & 2/29 Inf Bns; 3/20 Art Bn. ***Weert Sector:*** 1/30 & 2/41 Inf Bns; 4 & 17 Border Bns; 1/20 Art Bn
IV Corps
20 Inf Regt; 9 & 20 Border Bns; 20 MG Co; 1 & 5 Hussar Regts; 9 Art Regt; 1/18, 2/18 & 3/15 Art Bns; 3 AAMG Co; Sig Co; II MP Co; 4 Supply Regt; 4 Transport Bn
7 Div: 7 & 18 Inf Regts; 1/42 Inf Bn; 7 & 19 MG Cos; 1/8, 2/2 & 3/5 Art Bns; 7/1 AT Co; 3 AAMG Co; 153 AA Bty; 7 Eng Co; Sig Co
8 Div: 5, 16 & 21 Inf Regts; 8 MG Co; 1/5, 2/5, 3/1 & 3/18 Art Bns; 8/1 AT Co; 8 AAMG Co; 158 AA Bty; 8 Eng Co; Sig Co
Military Districts
TB Friesland: 33 & 36 Inf Regts; 1 & 12 Border Bns. ***TB Overijssel:*** 35 & 43 Inf Regts; 5, 9, 16, 19 & 22 Border Bns. ***TB South Limburg:*** 37 Inf Regt; 13 & 37 Border Bns. ***Zealand Command:*** 28, 38 & 40 Inf Regts; 14 Border Bn; 17 Art Regt.

the 100,000-strong Civic Guard *(Burgerwacht)* for volunteers aged over 30 years. The **Royal Constabulary** *(Koninklijke Marechaussee)* discharged police and border-guard duties under Army command.

The **Air Service** under LtGen Best had 139 aircraft in the 2-regiment Air Brigade, supported by AA units and VLK Observer Corps and AA detachments. The 10,250-strong **Royal Navy** *(Koninklijke Marine)* under VAdm Fürstner included the 1,500-strong Marine Corps *(Korps Mariniers)* under Col van Frijtag Drabbe.

Combat history

Forward lines of trenches and concrete pillboxes, often on canals, were defended by Military District battalions, while the Field Army manned inland defensive lines. The 'May Days' campaign commenced at 03.55hrs, 10 May, when German Sixth and Eighteenth Armies (130,000 men) assaulted the 250-mile eastern Dutch border. Meanwhile French Seventh Army advanced towards Breda to support Dutch forces.

In the northern Netherlands, TB Friesland manned the 'O' and 'Q' border lines, with 'F' Line connecting to the IJssel Line, whilst the earthwork Wons Line protected Fort Kornwederzand overlooking the IJsselmeer Enclosure Dam. This fort held out from 11 May, surrendering undefeated on the 15th.

In the east, TB Overijssel guarded the border and Overijssel forward line, protecting the Grebbe defensive line held by IV Corps (MajGen Bent) and II Corps (MajGen Harberts), with Fortress Holland's western and eastern fronts on the 'New Holland Water Line'. TB Overijssel troops destroyed the IJssel river bridges and abandoned the Overijssel Line when it was breached near Arnhem. German forces attacked II Corps on the Grebbe Line, breaking a stubborn and costly resistance by the 4th Div's 8th and 19th Inf Regts and 16th MG Co on Grebbeberg hill. II and IV Corps retreated on 14 May to the New Holland Water Line.

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In the south-eastern Netherlands, TB South Limburg defended the Maas river forward line, shielding III Corps (MajGen van Nijnatten), with G Bde on the Waal river and A and B Bdes on the Peel-Raam Line. Dutch troops destroyed the Maas bridges, but German forces breached the Maas Line, crossed Gennep bridge against strong resistance, and occupied Maastricht. The 6th Division defended the Peel-Raam Line at Mill, but III Corps, fearing outflanking, retreated first to 's-Hertogenbosch and then to Fortress Holland or Zealand Province.

The Luftwaffe attacked the southern Netherlands, held by TB Zealand on open ground. Paratroopers dropped behind the defensive lines into Fortress Holland, occupying the Maas bridges at Moerdijk and landing on Dordrecht and IJsselmonde islands near Rotterdam. Infantry were air-landed on Ockenburg, Valkenburg and Ypenburg military airfields in Fortress Holland, until the airfields were retaken by I Corps. Meanwhile French Seventh Army elements and the Dutch Light Div were driven back by dive-bombers, as German infantry and tanks in North Brabant joined the paratroopers threatening Rotterdam. The Luftwaffe's KG 54 bombed Rotterdam on 14 May, killing over 900 civilians – at that date a shocking event; German forces later occupied the city, which was defended by engineers, signal and training units, and marines. The Dutch Navy sailed to England on 14 May. The Air Brigade was destroyed, but aircrew and AA units had claimed more than 300 German aircraft.

Four corps held Fortress Holland for five days, but, faced with the bombing of Utrecht, Gen Winkelman surrendered at 16.50hrs on 14 May. Dutch and French troops fought on in Zealand, retreating into Belgium on the 17th. Dutch forces had fought bravely but surrendered to minimize civilian losses, after suffering about 10,800 casualties and inflicting about 9,300 on the Germans. The Army was formally disbanded on 15 July 1940; but 4,200 personnel joined the 'Construction Service' *(Opbouwdienst)*, wearing Army uniforms, officers with a dark blue lanyard and lower ranks a white cloth sleeve triangle.

A private and a corporal (right) of 3rd Platoon, 3rd Bicycle Sqn, 1st Hussar Regt in training during the 28 August 1939 mobilization. Both wear the M1937 field-grey cycling half-coat (see Plate F3) and baggy rainproof trousers with aprons, with an M1927 helmet and an M1931 sidecap. They carry M1895 cavalry carbines with two-piece slings, and long M1895 bayonets. The right-shoulder bandoliers were officially discontinued in 1938, and they also wear (see left) two sets of triple cavalry ammo pouches. The Hembrug Zaandam bicycles could carry a Lewis LMG. (L. op den Velde)

Infantry section, 1939, their short New Model No.4 carbines suggesting an elite bicycle unit. The standing soldier wears the M1927 helmet and M1923 greatcoat; the others, including the sergeant (first right), show M1934 tunics, M1926 dismounted troops' gasmask bags and long M1895 bayonets. For transporting their HMGs and mortars cyclist regiments were issued Harley-Davidson and BMW R12 motorcycles, and the 47mm AT platoons had DAF and Ford V8 lorries. (Author's collection)

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Dutch platoon on a weekly training march in autumn 1939. They wear the M1934 service uniform, with the taller M1931 or lower M1914 sidecap, trousers and puttees, and carry the standard 6.5mm M1895 Mannlicher rifle. The officer or officer-cadet WO (far right) has a private-purchase uniform with M1931 officers' sidecap. The sergeant (centre foreground) wears a superior quality private-purchase uniform; note his M1925 pistol, and dismounted troops' canvas belt-support straps. The combination of the NCOs' pistols, and the black leather leggings worn by the sergeant (second right), suggests an AT platoon. (M. Talens Collection)

Service uniform

The M1912 service uniform colour was modified on 10 November 1914 from greenish-grey to 'field-grey' (bluish-grey), used for the practically identical M1916, M1923 and M1934 uniforms. Officers and career NCOs wore superior quality privately-purchased uniforms, and conscript NCOs and men could buy superior quality as an alternative to lower quality issue uniforms.

Generals wore the M1912 peaked cap in field-grey, with gold crown and seam piping, and from 8 October 1915 a field-grey band with an oval orange and gold wire national cockade in a gold oak wreath, gold upper band piping, gold zig-zag pattern lower edging, a black patent leather peak and chinstrap with a gold buckle and bronze buttons showing flaming grenades. Lower ranks wore the M1928 kepi, introduced 27 February 1928, with a field-grey cloth band and peak, brown leather chinstrap with a bronze buckle and standard buttons showing the Lion of Nassau. Field officers wore an orange cockade with a button-colour wire edging and loop and a lion button, above a bronze unit badge and button-colour crown and band pipings. Subalterns had field-grey cloth crown piping; WOs, branch-colour upper band piping; NCOs, a yellow/white silk cockade edging and loop, from 1934 an orange metal unit badge, and branch-colour band pipings. Enlisted men purchased kepis, with a yellow/white metal cockade edging and loop, or were issued an M1914 field-grey sidecap with branch-colour flap piping and bronze unit badge. Their M1931 sidecap had a fold-up peak, no piping, and a bronze (1934, orange) unit badge.

The M1934 officers' tunic, introduced 26 January 1934, had a standing collar piped in branch colour, rounded shoulder straps, 7 bronze lion front buttons, external pleated breast pockets and unpleated waist pockets with scalloped buttoned flaps, and square 2-button cuffs piped in branch colour. The M1934 enlisted ranks' tunic had internal breast pockets with scalloped buttoned flaps. From 1 March 1940 all ranks could wear rough-quality tunics without collar or cuff piping, but few did.

General officers wore M1915 field-grey calf-length trousers introduced 27 February 1915, with two 2cm scarlet stripes; officers and WOs had branch-colour piping, with M1912 black leather leggings and ankle boots; NCOs and men wore plain calf-length trousers, M1915 field-grey woollen puttees and M1912 ankle boots. Officers and WOs wore the M1923 brown leather belt and cross-brace and the M1912 sword or M1917 assault knife, introduced August 1917; NCOs and men wore no service belt.

The M1923 dismounted greatcoat, introduced 22 September 1923, had two rows of 7 bronze lion buttons (general officers, flaming grenades), a turn-down collar, no shoulder straps, two internal waist

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pockets with slash flaps, plain turn-back cuffs and buttoned rear half-belts. General Staff and Cavalry wore an M1913 black sealskin busby 20cm high (Horse Artillery, a 27cm bearskin), with an orange cockade and gilt (Cavalry, silver) chain chinstrap. The M1923 field-grey cavalry breeches were reinforced with black leather, and worn with M1912 leggings; the M1923 mounted greatcoat had two rows of 5 buttons. Bicycle regiments and Military Police wore the M1937 field-grey cycling half-coat, which was a cut-down mounted greatcoat.

Field uniform

The field uniform was the service uniform with a helmet or sidecap, plus field equipment. Second-line troops wore the M1916 helmet or the M1922 with an inward-folding rim; first-line troops, usually the M1927 or M1934 helmets with a deep neck-guard; and some motorcyclists wore the M1934 with black leather earflaps, issued April 1940. Helmets were painted greenish-brown with an M1934 lion plate. Officers and WOs also wore the M1914 or M1931 sidecap with button-colour piping and unit badge.

All ranks had brown leather and greenish-grey or greenish-brown canvas field equipment. Hussar Motorcyclists and Motor Service personnel wore the M1935 black leather peaked crash-helmet; the M1918 motoring half-coat with a turn-down collar, two rows of 5 black buttons, internal vertical breast pockets with scalloped buttonless flaps, internal waist pockets with slash flaps, and buttoned cuffs; M1918 breeches, leggings and ankle boots. Armoured car crews wore a blue cotton overall, with external breast pockets with triangular buttoned flaps and internal flapless waist pockets.

Rank insignia (see Table 11, page 44)

Army and VLK reserve officers and WOs wore M1912 rank insignia introduced 7 September 1912, with 6-point metal stars on the M1934 tunic and M1923 greatcoat. General officers wore silver and gold stars (the crossed batons of *Generaal* rank were introduced 25 September 1914) and gold wire serrated edging on the tunic collar; a gold serrated bar and insignia on the greatcoat collar; and 4-2 silver stars widely spaced on the sleeves. Field officers wore bronze or silver (reverse button-colour) stars, from 15 July 1915 with a button-colour vertical bar; subalterns wore stars only. A captain regimental adjutant *(Kapitein/Ritmeester-adjudant)* or a lieutenant battalion adjutant *(Luitenant-adjudant)* also wore a button-colour star nearest the collar front. Reserve officers had blue (General Staff reserve, crimson) scalloped cloth collar patches.

Warrant officers and cadet WOs wore a reverse-colour button on the tunic collar, and a button on two 6cm-long button-colour braids on the greatcoat collar (a cadet's comparative youth sufficiently distinguished him from a WO).

Re-enlisted Sgt *(Sergeant Capitulant)* Johann Christiaan Meijer (first left) supervises a 47mm AT gun crew from 19th AT Co, 8th Inf Regt, early in 1940. All wear M1931 sidecaps. Meijer and one other soldier wear the black leather half-coat – unusual for infantry – with officers' calf-length trousers and black leather leggings. The others, including the conscript sergeant (first right), wear M1934 tunics. During the critical battle of Grebbenberg hill in May the 22-year-old Meijer left the front line in search of ammunition, but was arrested for desertion and executed on 12 May – a case that still arouses controversy. (Author's collection)

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A class of machine-gunners at an NCO training school pose in service uniform. They wear the private-purchase M1928 kepi, M1934 tunic, M1915 trousers and puttees and M1912 black ankle boots; their instructors (far left & right) have M1918 black leather leggings. They are training on the Austro-Hungarian 6.5mm M1908 Schwarzlose MG. (Author's collection)

There were also bandmaster, fortifications and torpedo-engineer WO ranks. NCOs wore button-colour cuff chevrons on the tunic and greatcoat, and senior enlisted ranks wider cuff chevrons: corporals in yellow/white cotton for gold/silver button-colour; senior privates in red on the left cuff only. Quartermaster-sergeants wore their second chevron on the left upper sleeve, whilst a qualified corporal or NCO awaiting promotion to the next rank wore a gold/silver button midway along the collar.

Branch insignia (see Table 6, opposite)

Branch colours and badges, unit badges and button-colours indicated branch-of-service affiliation. Headgear, tunics, and officers' and WOs' trousers had branch-colour piping, NCOs' chevrons branch-colour underlay. As mounted personnel, general officers, Cavalry (Hussars, Hussar Motorcyclists and Armoured Cars), Horse Artillery and Military Police had no tunic pipings, General Staff no cuff piping, and Horse Artillery and MPs no chevron underlay.

Bronze unit badges were worn on the kepi and sidecap, and from 1934 orange metal unit badges on enlisted kepis and sidecaps. Tunic collar branch badges were in gold (Cavalry, silver) wire for officers and WOs; yellow/white wool for NCOs, bronze/white metal for men. Medical Battalion officers and WOs had red and white embroidered badges, NCOs silk, men enamel. Motor Service NCOs and men had a red metal badge (from May 1940, NCOs red silk); Transport NCOs red silk, men red metal.

Dismounted dress tunics had gold buttons, mounted silver. The gold/silver button-colour, yellow/white for lower ranks, was reflected in kepi pipings, officers' sidecap piping and unit badges, field officers' collar bars, WOs' greatcoat collar braids, cuff chevrons, officers' collar badges and trade badges. VLK officers and WOs had blue (AA Artillery, scarlet) tunic piping and gold wire branch badges; their NCOs and men had badges as follows: Motor, 38mm motor wheel, red silk for NCOs, red metal for men; Shipping, fouled anchor; Observer Corps, binoculars; Railway, winged wheel; AA Artillery, crossed cannons and propeller.

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Qualification badges

On the left breast General Staff-qualified officers and Higher War School graduates wore a lion on a 16-point star in gold or silver wire respectively. Higher qualified WO and senior NCO instructors and administrators wore a silver or gold-embroidered crown on the left upper sleeve. NCOs with special military skills wore button-colour embroidered badges on the left upper sleeve, enlisted men in coloured wool: 1st or 2nd Class marksman, button-colour or scarlet 10 or 5-point star; pistol marksman, button-colour or scarlet M1925 pistol; 1st Class mortarman, button-colour or blue mortar bomb; 1st Class LMG marksman, button-colour crossed bullets above a bar; LMG marksman – as before without bar; AA fire commander – scarlet fire-control apparatus.

Table 6: Royal Netherlands Army selected branch insignia 26 January 1934–15 July 1940

Branch	Branch colour	Collar branch badge	Kepi/sidecap unit badge	Button colour
General officers	Scarlet	-	Wreathed cockade	Gold
General Staff officers	Crimson	-	Lion	Gold
Grenadier, 23 Inf Regts, Grenadier Border Bn & Border Reserve Co	Scarlet	Flaming grenade	Flaming grenade	Gold
Light Infantry & 24 Inf Regts, Light Border Bn & Border Reserve Co	Green	Horn	Horn	Gold
Infantry Regts	Blue	-	1–22, 25–46	Gold
Border Infantry Bns & Reserve Cos	Blue	-	1–22, 34, 38, 39, 45	Gold
Machine Gun Cos	Blue	-	1–21	Gold
Bicycle Infantry Regts	Blue	Bicycle wheel	1–2	Gold
Hussar Regts (2.1.1939)	Blue	-	1, 2, 4, 5	Silver
3rd Hussar Regt (2.1.1939)	Scarlet	-	3	Silver
Hussar Motorcycle Regts (17.9.1938)	Blue	Motor wheel	1–2	Silver
Armoured Car Sqns (2.6.1936)	Blue	Armoured car	1–2	Silver
Field Artillery Regts & Bns	Scarlet	Crossed cannons	1–20, 22–27	Gold
Horse Artillery Regt	Yellow	Crossed cannons	Lion	Gold
AA Artillery Regts	Scarlet	Crossed cannons on propeller	1–2	Gold
Coast Artillery Regt	Scarlet	Crossed shells	Lion	Gold
Engineer Regts (1.10.1938)	Blue	Roman helmet	1, 3	Gold
Signals Regt (1.5.1940)	Blue	Lightning bolts	2	Gold
Pontoon & Torpedo Engineer Corps	Scarlet	Fouled anchor	Lion	Gold
Military Police Cos	Black	-	I–V	Silver
Motor Service Bns	Blue	Motor wheel	Lion	Gold
Transport Cos (11.4.1940)	Blue	Winged motor wheel	Lion	Gold
Supply Regt	Blue	Crossed quill pens	Lion	Gold
Administration officers & WOs	Crimson	-	Lion	Silver
Medical officers	Blue	Gold wreathed Staff of Aesculapius	Lion	Gold
Medical Bns (1938)	Blue	Red cross on disc	Lion	Gold
Veterinary officers	Blue	Gold wreathed Staff of Aesculapius	Lion	Silver
Air Service Regts officers	Blue	Aircraft motor, propeller	1–3	Gold
Air Service Regts enlisted	Blue	Aircraft motor, propeller	Lion	Gold

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BELGIUM

A bicycle detachment of Ardennes Light Infantry, led by a sergeant, pause in an Ardennes village in about 1937. They wear the *Chasseurs Ardennais* green beret and boar's-head badge, M1935 enlisted ranks' field tunics, bicycle breeches, black leather leggings and ankle boots, with brown leather belts, support straps and triple ammunition pouches. Normally only young recruits wore no boar's head on their collar patches and no regimental number on their beret, as here, but the age of these men suggests reservists on annual recall. They carry their Mauser rifles strapped to the bicycle frame; other field equipment and ammunition are carried in the accompanying Chevrolet M1928 lorry. (Frans Gorissen Collection)

Organization

Belgium comprises both the mainly northern, Dutch-speaking, Flemish and mainly southern, French-speaking, Walloon communities. For reasons of space this text generally gives French terms only.

King Leopold III was commander-in-chief of the Belgian Army *(Armée belge/Belgische leger)*, with LtGen van Overstraeten as his ADC, and (from January 1940) LtGen Michiels as chief of the General Staff. It comprised 126,800 men in peacetime, including 40,000–50,000 20-year-old conscripts. From 15 December 1936 the latter completed one year's military training before 15 years in the 1st and 2nd Reserves and 10 years in the Territorial forces. Belgium increased military spending in 1936, and began mobilizing on 26 August 1939, reaching 650,000 men by May 1940. Apart from the **General Staff**, there were eight combat branches and three support services:

Infantry: 86 regiments – 52 Line (1–9, 11–25, 28, 29, 31–39, 41–44, 51–59, 61–64); 1–4 Grenadier; 1–4 Carabinier, 1–12 Light Infantry; 1–5 Carabinier-Cyclist; 1–7 Ardennes Light Infantry *(Chasseurs Ardennais*, ChA*)*, plus 1 ChA Motorcycle Bn; 1–2 Border Cyclist Bns; and Limburg Bn. **Cavalry**: 10 regiments – 8 motorcycle (1–4 Lancers, 1 Guides, 1 Light Horse, 1 & 2 Light); 2 motorized (2 Guides, 4 Light Horse). 1 Tank Sqn. **Artillery**: 40 regiments – 6 Army (1–6), 6 Corps (13–16, 19, 20), 24 Divisional (1–12, 17, 18, 21–26, 31–34); 2 Fortress (Liège, Namur), 1 & 2 Anti-Aircraft. **Engineers**: 26 battalions – 5 Corps (20–24), 21 Divisional (1–19, 25, 26); 2 regiments (Army, 40). **Signals**: 27 battalions – 1 Army (31), 5 Corps (21–24, 30), 21 Divisional (1–18, 28, 29, 40); 1 regiment (Army); 5 Signals companies: 3 Corps (25–27), 2 Divisional (19, 20). **Air Service**: 3 Air regiments (1–3). **Transport Corps**: 8 regiment-status corps. **Supply Service**: 3 corps (2–4). **Administration Service**: officers & NCOs only. **Medical Service**: 3 corps (1–3).

In peacetime, Belgium fielded six active Corps (I–IV, VII & Cavalry), plus V and VI Reserve Corps, Keyaerts Group and Ninitte Group. There were 22 divisions: 2 active motorized (numbered 1 & 2 Cavalry); 8 active infantry (1–6 Infantry, 1 & 2 ChA); 6x 1st Reserve infantry (7–12), 6x 2nd Reserve infantry (13–18); also 10 division-status Reinforcement and & Training Centres (CRIs) training recruits, and Army Recruiting Centres (CRABs) for untrained recruits.

Active and 1st Reserve infantry divisions had HQ troops, and 3 infantry and 1 artillery regiments; 2nd Reserve divisions had a lower establishment. A 3,642-strong **infantry regiment** had HQ and medical companies and a reconnaissance platoon; 3x 956-strong fusilier (rifle) **battalions**, with 1 MG and 3x 230-strong fusilier companies; and a heavy weapons battalion (not for 2nd Reserve) with MG, AT and mortar companies. A

(continued on page 33)

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DENMARK, 9 APRIL 1940

1: *Generalløjtnant* Wilhelm Prior; GHQ, Copenhagen

2: *Overofficiant*, 2nd Eng Bn; Copenhagen

3: *Underkorporal*, Bredevad Detachment, 4th Inf Bn; southern Jutland

A

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DENMARK, 9 APRIL 1940

1: *Korporal*, 14th AA Bn; Sønderbro, southern Jutland

2: *Sekondløjtnant*, Lundtoftebjerg Detachment, 4th Inf Bn; southern Jutland

3: *Menig*, 2nd Bn, Inf Pioneer Command; Søgaard, south-western Jutland

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NORWAY

1: *Generalmajor* Ruge; GHQ, Gudbrandsdalen, 15 April 1940

2: *Korporal*, 11th Møre Inf Regt; Dombås, 17 April 1940

3: *Gardist*, 1st Royal Guards Co; Midtskogen Farm, 9 April 1940

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NORWAY

1: *Fenrik*, Alta Bn; Vassdalen, 7 May 1940

2: *Sersjant*, 3rd Trøndelag Dragoon Regt; Åndalsnes, 2 May 1940

LUXEMBOURG

3: *Soldat de 1ère classe*, Volunteer Co; Ettelbrück, 10 May 1940

D

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THE NETHERLANDS, 10 MAY 1940
1: *Huzaar*, 1st Armd Car Sqn, Schipol
2: *Luitenant-adjudant*, 1st AA Regt, Utrecht
3: *Generaal* Henri Winkelman; GHQ, The Hague

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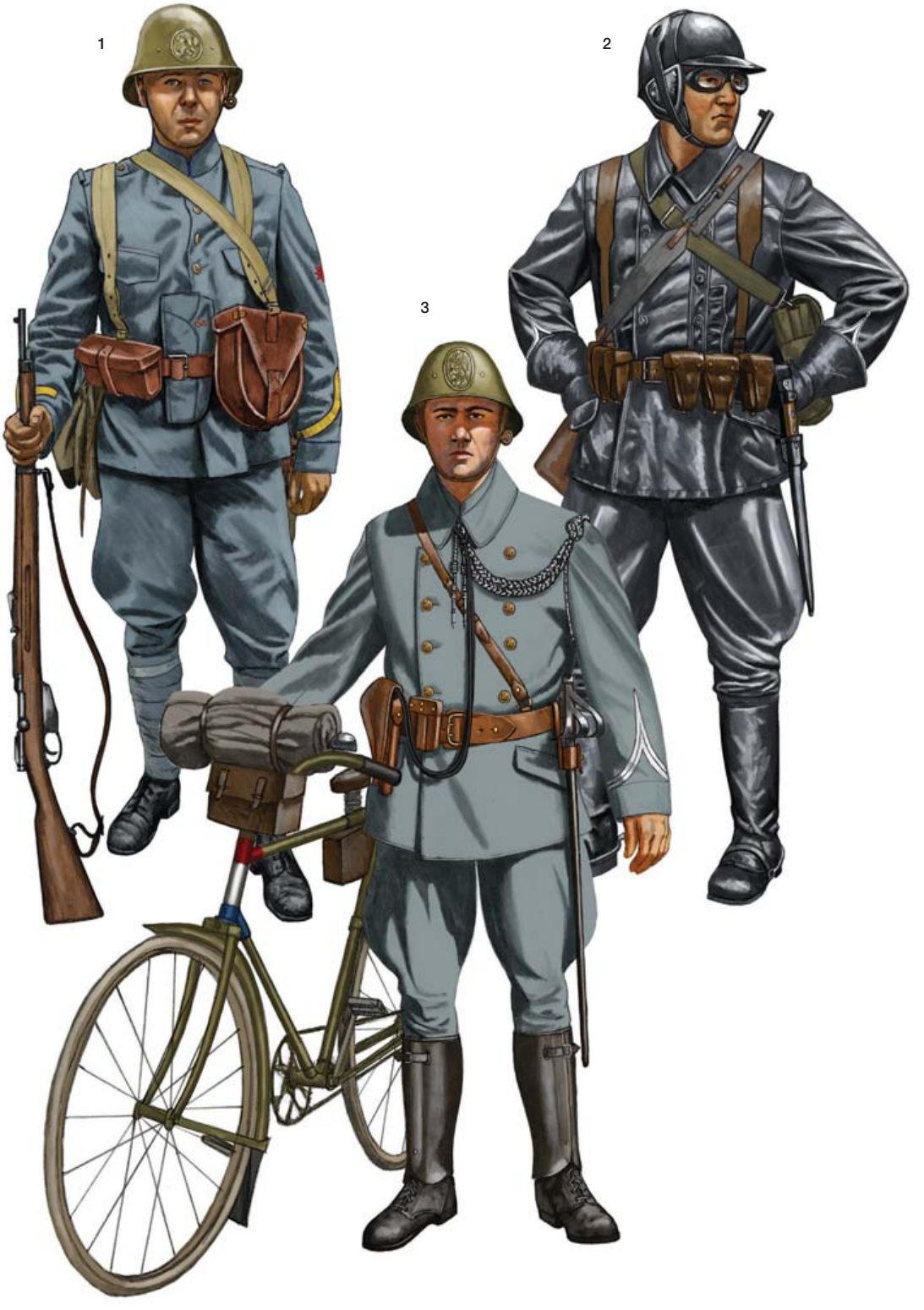
THE NETHERLANDS, 12-13 MAY 1940

1: *Korporaal*, 8th Infantry Regt, Grebbeberg

2: *Wachtmeester der 1e Klasse*, 1st Hussar Mo'cycle Regt, Wassenaar

3: *Sergeant-Majoor*, III Corps Police Co, Betuwe



F

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BELGIUM

1: *Lieutenant-Général* Deffontaine, VII Corps; Namur, 10 May 1940

2: *Adjudant chef de section*, Liège Fortress Regt; Eben-Emael, 10 May 1940

3: *Brigadier*, 1st Light Horse Regt; Dyle Line, 12 May 1940

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BELGIUM

1: *Sergent*, 13th Line Regt; Lys River, 25 May 1940

2: *Lieutenant*, 3rd Lancer Regt; Kortrijk, 24 May 1940

3: *Caporal*, 1st Ardennes Lt Inf Regt; Vinkt, 26 May 1940

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Officers of 1st Motorcycle Co, 1st Motorcycle Bn of the Ardennes Light Infantry in service uniform, 1940. They are (left to right): 2nd Lt Evany, 2nd Lt Conrardy, 2nd Lt Raymond Leblanc, Lt Uselding, Sen Capt Reyntens, Lt Gerard, Sen Capt Flébus (commander), 2nd Lt Gobier, Capt Faber, 2nd Lt Nivelle and Lt Renard. All wear M1935 service uniform with the M1933 green beret with gilt boar's head above the battalion number. Renard wears a first-pattern black leather half-coat with regulation M1935 collar patches. Raymond Leblanc (third left) later fought in the Belgian Resistance, and in 1946 he helped Georges Remi ('Hergé') re-establish himself in post-war Belgium by launching the successful *Journal de Tintin* weekly magazine. (Museum of the Chasseurs Ardennais, Marche-en-Famenne)

fusilier company had three 65-strong platoons, each with 4x 13-strong combat groups; an MG company had 3x 2-section platoons. An **artillery regiment** had an HQ battery, 3x 3-battery field gun battalions, and a 3-battery howitzer battalion (2nd Reserve, 2 battalions). Divisional **AT companies** had 12x C47 guns, either transported on lorries or mounted on T-13 AFVs.

The **Ardennes Light Infantry** (formed 10 March 1933) and **Border Cyclists** (13 March 1934) were élite formations of 3-year volunteers, defending the Ardennes forest in Limbourg and Luxembourg provinces. 1st ChA Division had 3 light infantry regiments, each with HQ, medical, motorcycle, tank (3x T-15 light) and T-13 AT companies; and 3 light infantry battalions, each with 3 MG/fusilier bicycle companies. 2nd ChA Division had 3 regiments, each with HQ, medical and mortar/AT companies; and 1 bicycle and 2 fusilier battalions. The ChA Motorcycle Bn in VII Corps had 2 motorcycle companies and an MG/AT company. The 1st and 2nd Border Cyclist Regts (formed 1 October 1937 and 15 March 1940) each had motorcycle and T-13 AT companies, and 3x 2-company bicycle battalions. They formed the Border Cyclist Bde on 19 May 1940.

A **cavalry division** comprised HQ troops plus 3 cavalry and 2 carabinier-cyclist regiments. From 10 May 1935, 6 Lancer, Guides and Light Horse mounted regiments converted to motorcycle units. A 1,314-strong **motorcycle regiment** had a tank squadron (6x T-15 light), and 2x 600-strong motorcycle battalions, each with 2 motorcycle and 1 MG/AT squadrons. Cavalry bicycle squadrons were attached to active and 1st Reserve infantry divisions, and 3-squadron **bicycle battalions** to 2nd Reserve divisions. The 2nd Guides and 4th Lancers formed 2-battalion **lorried infantry regiments** within the Motorized Cavalry Brigade. The Army had 42 **tanks**: 36x T-15 light, in 6 motorcycle regiments, and 3 in each ChA Div; plus 8x ACG-1 (French AMC 35) mediums in the Cavalry Corps Tank Sqn (formed 1 September 1939). The Liège and Namur **Fortress Artillery Regiments** defended networks of concrete forts: 14 batteries and 12 forts at Liège, and 7 batteries and forts at Namur.

The **Army Air Service** *(Aeronautique Militaire/Militaire Luchtvaart)* had 234 aircraft in 18 squadrons, under MajGen Hiernaux. The Naval Base at Bruges, under MajGen Glorie, defended the 41-mile seaboard with Army coastal units and the 640-strong **Naval Corps** *(Corps de Marine/*

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Table 7: Belgian Army selected battle order 10–28 May 1940

GHQ (Brussels)
1 & 2 Light Regts; 1–4 Army Art Regts; 1 Fortress Regt; Army Eng & Sig Regts, 31 Sig Bn
11 Infantry Div: 14, 20 & 29 Line Regts; Bicycle Sqn (1 Light Cav); 9 Art Regt; lorried & T-13 AT Cos; 11 Eng & Sig Bns
16 Inf Div: 37, 41 & 44 Line Regts; Bicycle Bn (1 Lancers); 24 Art Regt; 18 Eng Bn; 16 Sig Bn
I Corps (Tongeren)
Limburg Border Bicycle Bn; 14 Art Regt; 21 Eng & Sig Bns; I Corps services*
4 Inf Div: 7, 11 & 15 Line Regts; Bicycle Sqn (1 Lt Horse); 8 Art Regt; lorried & T-13 AT Cos; 4 Eng & Sig Bns
7 Inf Div: 18 Line, 2 Grenadier & 2 Carabinier Regts; Bicycle Sqn (1 Guides); 14 Art Regt; lorried & T-13 AT Cos; 6 Eng Bn; 7 Sig Bn
II Corps (Aarschot)
16 Art Regt; 24 Eng Bn; 22 Sig Bn; II Corps services
6 Inf Div: 9 Line, 1 Grenadier & 1 Carabinier Regts; Bicycle Sqn (1 Guides); 6 Art Regt; 1 & 2 Lorried AT Cos; 7 Eng Bn; 6 Sig Bn
9 Inf Div: 8, 16 & 17 Line Regts; Bicycle Sqn (3 Lancers); 4 Art Regt; lorried & T-13 AT Cos; 6 Eng & Sig Bns
III Corps (Liège)
1 & 2 Border Bicycle Regts; 15 Art Regt; Liège Fortress Regt; 23 Eng & Sig Bns; III Corps services
2 Inf Div: 5, 6 & 28 Line Regts; Bicycle Sqn (3 Lancers); 2 Art Regt; lorried & T-13 AT Cos; 7 Eng Bn; 2 Sig Bn
3 Inf Div: 1, 12 & 25 Line Regts; Bicycle Sqn (1 Lancers); 3 Art Regt; lorried & T-13 AT Cos; 3 Eng & Sig Bns
IV Corps (Lier)
13 Art Regt; Liège Fortress Regt; 22 Eng Bn; 24 Sig Bn; IV Corps services
12 Inf Div: 2, 22 & 23 Line Regts; Bicycle Sqn (2 Lancers); 7 Art Regt; lorried AT Co; 2 Eng Bn; 12 Sig Bn
15 Inf Div: 31, 42 & 43 Line Regts; Bicycle Bn (2 Lt Horse); 23 Art Regt; 16 Eng Bn; 15 Sig Bn
18 Inf Div: 39 Line, 3 Grenadier & 3 Carabinier Regts; Bicycle Bn (2 Lancers); 26 Art Regt; T-13 AT Co; 15 Eng Bn; 18 Sig Bn
V Corps (Antwerp)
25 Sig Co
13 Inf Div: 32–34 Line Regts; Bicycle Bn (1 Lt Horse); 21 Art Regt; 14 Eng Bn; 13 Sig Bn
17 Inf Div: 7–9 Lt Inf Regts; Bicycle Bn (1 Guides); 25 Art Regt; 17 Eng & Sig Bns
VI Corps (Sint-Gillis)
1 & 2 Light Regts; 26 Sig Co
5 Inf Div: 1, 2 & 4 Lt Inf Regts; Bicycle Sqn (1 Lancers); 11 Art Regt; 1 & 2 Lorried AT Cos; 5 Eng & Sig Bns
10 Inf Div: 3, 5 & 6 Lt Inf Regts; Bicycle Sqn (2 Lt Horse); 10 Art Regt; lorried & T-13 AT Cos; 8 Eng Bn; 10 Sig Bn
VII Corps (Namur)
Namur Fortress Regt; 3/19 Eng Co; 27 Sig Co
8 Inf Div: 13, 19 & 21 Line Regts; Bicycle Sqn (2 Lt Horse); 5 Art Regt; lorried & T-13 AT Cos; 10 Eng Bn; 8 Sig Bn
2 Ardennes Lt Div: 4–6 Ardennes Lt Inf Regts; 20 Art Regt; 2/19 Eng Co; 20 Sig Co
Cavalry Corps (Sint-Truiden)
19 Art Regt; 20 Eng Bn; 30 Sig Bn; Cav Corps services
2 Cav Div: 1 Lancers, 1 & 2 Lt Horse Regts; T-13 AT Bn; 2 & 4 Carabinier Bicycle Regts; 18 Art Regt; 26 Eng Bn; 29 Sig Bn
1 Inf Div: 3, 4 & 24 Line Regts; Bicycle Sqn (2 Lancers); 1 Art Regt; lorried & T-13 AT Cos; 1 Eng & Sig Bns
14 Inf Div: 35, 36 & 38 Line Regts; Bicycle Bn (3 Lancers); 22 Art Regt; 13 Eng Bn; 14 Sig Bn
Motorized Cav Brigade: 4 Lancers, 2 Guides Motorized Regts
Ninitte Battle Group: 1 Carabinier Bicycle, 2 Guides & 1 Lt Horse Regts
Keyaerts Battle Group (Saint-Hubert)
Ardennes Lt Inf M'cycle Bn
1 Cav Div: 1 Guides, 2 & 3 Lancer Regts; 1 & 3 Carabinier Bicycle Regts; 17 Art Regt; 25 Eng Bn; 28 Sig Bn
1 Ardennes Lt Div: 1–3 Ardennes Lt Inf Regts; 1/19 Eng Co; 19 Sig Co
Reinforcement & Training Centres (Etterbeek)
1 CRI (52–54 Line Regts); *2 CRI* (55, 56 & 58 Line Regts); *3 CRI* (51, 62 & 65 Line Regts); *4 CRI* (57, 61 & 64 Line Regts); *5 CRI* (10–12 Lt Inf Regts); *6 CRI* (59 Line, 4 Gren'r, 4 C'binier Regts); *Ardennes Lt Inf CRI* (7 ChA Regt; M'cycle & Border Bicycle Bns); *Mobile Troops CRI* (5 Bicycle, 7 M'cycle Regts); *Art CRI* (31–34 Regts)

* Corps services comprised Medical, Supply and Transport units

Marinekorps), formed 15 September 1939 under Maj Decarpentrie. The **Rural Police** *(Gendarmerie/Rijskwacht)* supplied 2 light regiments, each with 2 battalions, a battalion having 2 motorcycle and 1 MG/AT squadrons and a Berliet VUDB armoured car platoon.

Combat history

Expecting attacks on the northern and southern borders, the Belgian Army established defensive outposts along the Dutch border, and a delaying line from Antwerp along the Albert Canal to Liège, held by V (LtGen Vandenbergen), IV (LtGen Bogaerts), II (LtGen Michem), Cavalry (LtGen De Néand) and I Corps (LtGen Vanderveken). III (LtGen De Krahe) and VII Corps (LtGen Deffontaine) deployed along

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the Meuse/Maas river from Liège to Namur. These forces would withdraw to defend central Belgium on the Main Defensive Line from Antwerp to Wavre, designated the River Dyle or KW (Koninshooikt-Wavre) Line, reinforced by VI Corps (LtGen Verstraete) and British forces; meanwhile French First Army defended the 25-mile unfortified Wavre-Namur 'Gembloux Gap'. The Keyaerts Group (LtGen Keyaerts) in southern Belgium would withdraw from defensive outposts in the eastern Ardennes, and be reinforced by French Second and Ninth Armies, while French Seventh Army would defend northern Belgium and link with the Dutch Army in Fortress Holland. German forces involved comprised Army Group 'A' and part of 'B'.

A 13-man Belgian infantry section on parade. They wear M1931 helmets, infantry double-breasted greatcoats with brass buttons, and M1935 khaki trousers confined by M1891 black leather anklets over ankle boots (see Plate H1). They have the M1915 Belgian pattern of the British M1908 Mills webbing equipment, with four-pouch rather than the British five-pouch sets, and hold 7.65mm M1889 Mauser rifles. The conscript sergeant section commander (left) has white metal buttons and an M1935 rank stripe on his cuff. (Royal Army Museum, Brussels)

The '18 Days' Campaign' commenced at 04.00hrs on 10 May 1940, when German glider-borne paratroopers neutralized Liège's Fort Eben-Emael, securing it the next day; however, other Liège forts fought on until 28 May. The Air Service unsuccessfully challenged German air superiority. German infantry crossed the Albert Canal, forcing I–III and Cavalry Corps to the Dyle Line (13 May). French First Army elements were defeated at Hannut (12–14 May), abandoning Gembloux (15 May) as Allied forces retreated to the Scheldt river in north-west Belgium. Four Belgian corps reluctantly abandoned the intact Dyle Line (16 May) and Brussels (17 May), and VII Corps evacuated Namur (16 May).

Belgian troops occupying the Albert Canal line during the hard winter of 1939–40. General mobilization to 650,000 men between 25 August and 22 November 1939 created huge demand for weapons and equipment; the Belgians resorted to obsolete Great War weapons, especially artillery pieces, and note the ex-German trench mortar in the foreground. (Royal Army Museum, Brussels)

German armoured formations penetrated the Ardennes on 10 May, forcing back Keyaerts Group despite spirited counter-attacks by 1st Ardennes Light Div and French Second Army elements. French Seventh Army retreated from the Netherlands into Belgium on 12 May. By 15 May, German forces had occupied the Ardennes and reached Sedan in France, outflanking Allied forces in Belgium. German forces captured Antwerp from IV and V Corps (15–19 May); and from 22 May the remaining units of all seven corps were trapped in the 56-mile Ghent Bridgehead. Belgian forces stubbornly defended the Lys River line, but were buckling under the strain by 27 May, and surrendered at 04.00 on 28 May. The Army had fought to a standstill, sustaining 22,500 casualties – German casualties against the Allies were 52,755 – thus earning German admiration, if not (unjustly) that of French and British commentators.

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The crew of a 47mm M1931 FRC C47 anti-tank gun, belonging to the AT Co of a Carabinier regiment's IV (Heavy) Bn – the Carabiniers' hunting-horn insignia is just visible on their collars. A company's 12 guns, transported by lorries, were very effective against German armour, but were slow to get into and out of position. Consequently they were usually fired from prepared positions; the first surprise shot was the most effective, but thereafter the crews were in danger from German counter-fire and envelopment. (Royal Army Museum, Brussels)

About 200,000 CRI and CRAB personnel reached Montpellier, southern France. Some 4,640 CRI men re-formed 7th Inf Div, but reached Brittany too late to fight; CRI labour battalions fought in eastern France in June, and CRAB recruits were posted to French units. All personnel returned to Belgium after the French Armistice of 25 June.

UNIFORMS & INSIGNIA

Service uniform

Traditional coloured uniforms were superseded on 20 August 1915 by a greenish-brown 'khaki' uniform, updated 23 August 1935 as the M1935. Officers' superior quality uniforms suggested British influence, while rougher-quality enlisted ranks' uniforms reflected French traditions.

The general officers' peaked cap had a khaki cloth peak; a gold wire chinstrap with gilt buttons embossed with a Belgian lion; and gold wire lower edging to the dark red band (the 'branch' piping colour). On the front of the crown was a black (centre)-yellow-red enamel national cockade; on the band, two vertical gold wire bars flanked the gold 'branch' badge on either side. Field officers had a khaki cap band with a branch badge between single bars, 3mm branch piping on the upper edge, and (from 1935) gold wire on the lower edge. Subalterns wore the branch badge only. The open-collar officers' tunic, worn with a khaki shirt and tie, had pointed, scalloped (i.e. 'duck's-foot') shoulder straps; 4 gold lion front buttons; external pleated breast pockets and unpleated waist pockets with scalloped and square buttoned flaps respectively; and plain pointed cuffs. A brown leather belt was worn with a cross-brace. Light brown cavalry twill breeches were worn with brown leather riding boots, or for undress plain khaki trousers and ankle boots. A light khaki cotton tunic and breeches could be worn in summer. The M1936 officers' greatcoat, introduced 27 November 1936, had two rows of 5 gold buttons, a turn-down collar, internal slash waist pockets without flaps, scalloped shoulder straps, turn-back cuffs, and 2-button rear half-belt.

A warrant officer 'Reserve officer candidate' (CSLR) wore the officers' tunic. Other WOs wore the subalterns' peaked cap with silver wire chinstrap, silver buttons and cap badge. The M1935 WOs' closed-collar tunic, introduced 24 December 1935, had 6 front buttons; the belt had no cross-brace, and the M1936 officers' greatcoat bore silver insignia. WOs

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and NCOs wore khaki trousers with black leather ankle boots. NCOs wore peaked caps with khaki cloth chinstraps, white metal buttons and badges; a superior quality enlisted closed-collar tunic with square cuffs, white metal front buttons and 2 back buttons; and a superior quality enlisted greatcoat. Enlisted men wore the M1935 sidecap and inferior quality tunic with square breast pocket flaps and brass buttons; a brown leather belt with scabbarded bayonet behind the left hip; M1935 khaki trousers; M1891 black leather anklets and ankle boots. The dismounted troops' double-breasted khaki greatcoat had two rows of 5 brass buttons, scalloped shoulder straps, plain cuffs, internal waist pockets with square buttoned flaps, and a 2-button half-belt.

All ranks could wear the khaki M1928 sidecap, with flap braids in branch facing colour, branch crown and flap piping and tassels, and, on the left side, M1939 metal unit badges introduced on 16 December that year. General officers had two flap braids, gold wire piping, thick gold tassels and a gilt metal branch badge; field officers, two braids and branch piping, thick gold tassels and gilt badge; subalterns, one braid and thinner tassels. WOs and NCOs had one light khaki braid, branch piping, thin silver wire tassels, and a silver or white metal unit badge respectively. Enlisted men had thin thread tassels in branch facing colour, and white metal unit badges. The élite Ardennes Light Infantry and Border Cyclists wore large M1933 green and M1934 royal-blue French alpine berets respectively, with peaked-cap branch insignia, unit numbers, and gold wire bars for general and field officers.

Mounted troops (Cavalry, Artillery, Transport) wore khaki reinforced breeches, officers with brown leather leggings and ankle boots and lower ranks with black. NCOs and men wore the enlisted ranks' single-breasted greatcoat with 5 white metal or brass front buttons respectively, scalloped shoulder straps, turn-back cuffs, and a wider skirt; Cavalry had two vertical internal breast pockets, Artillery waist pockets. Bicycle troops

A Vickers Carden-Loyd T-15 light tank from a cavalry regiment in spring 1940, before the German offensive. The T-15's 13.2mm Hotchkiss HMG was effective against 'soft-skin' targets but not against other tanks. Just visible on the turret is the small black (centre)-yellow-red national roundel; almost invisible above it is a small royal cipher 'LIIIL' painted in white. The officer in the turret wears an M1935 light khaki cotton summer field tunic; his driver (foreground) has an M1931 AFV helmet, and first-pattern black leather half-coat without collar insignia. Behind the tank is a motorcyclist wearing the M1938 cork crash-helmet. (Royal Army Museum, Brussels)

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Following the Munich crisis Belgium carried out a partial mobilization between September and November 1938. These Carabinier-Cyclists are wearing M1920 steel helmets; M1935 enlisted ranks' tunics, with brass cycle-wheel branch badges on dark green collar patches piped yellow; cyclists' breeches, brown leather leggings and ankle boots. Note the M1934 version of the Mills canvas web belt and support straps with large ammunition pouches for mounted troops. Most of a cyclist's personal equipment was strapped to his mount. (Royal Army Museum, Brussels)

(Chasseurs Ardennais, Border and Cavalry cyclists, and Light regiments) wore mounted uniforms with special breeches, and a 4-button khaki half-coat with scalloped shoulder straps, plain cuffs, two internal waist pockets with square buttoned flaps, and greatcoat insignia (see Plate H3).

Field uniform

The field uniform was the service dress worn with the steel helmet or sidecap and field equipment. Three models of the French Adrian helmet were worn, painted greenish-brown with a Belgian lion helmet-plate: the French-made M1915 with turned-down rim, introduced 26 October 1915; the Belgian M1920 with a shallow turned-down rim, issued to 2nd Reserve and CRI units; and the Belgian M1931, with a flatter rim, for active and 1st Reserve units.

Tank and T-13 AT crews and motorcyclists wore various models of leather half-coats, initially in greenish-grey and later black, with two rows of 5 bronze buttons and plain cuffs. One model had scalloped shoulder straps, and internal breast and waist pockets with buttonless square flaps; another lacked shoulder straps, and had two external pleated breast pockets with scalloped flaps, and two flapless internal waist pockets. Leather or khaki cloth breeches were worn with leather leggings and ankle boots. Tank, AT and some Fortress Artillery crews wore the M1920 AFV helmet (the M1915 Adrian with a brown leather pad replacing the front brim), or the similar M1935 model based on the M1931 helmet. Motorcyclists wore a greenish-brown painted fibre M1937 Levior helmet, or the cork M1938 helmet. All helmets carried the lion badge.

Rank insignia (see Table 12, page 46)

On the M1935 tunic officers wore M1915 collar rank insignia on pentangular collar-patches, 50–105mm long depending on the insignia, with insignia in gold metal or wire. Rank stars and curved bars were worn on the M1936 greatcoat collar, and general officers wore 3-2 gold wire rank stars on greatcoat and tunic shoulder straps.

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Table 8: Belgian Army selected branch insignia 23 August 1935–28 May 1940

Branch	Peaked cap branch badge	Branch collar patch			*Shoulder-strap insignia*
		Facing	Piping	Badge	
Generals (combat branches)	Thunderbolt	Black	Dark red	Thunderbolt	3-2 stars
Generals (services)	Thunderbolt	Branch	Branch	Branch	3-2 stars
General Staff	Half thunderbolt	Branch	Branch	Half thunderbolt	Branch
Line Infantry	Crown	Scarlet	Royal blue	-	Crown/no.
Grenadiers	Grenade	Scarlet	Royal blue	Grenade	Crown/no.
Carabiniers	Horn	Dark green	Yellow	Horn	Crown/horn/no.
Light Infantry	Crown	Dark green	Yellow	-	Crown/no. in curl of horn
Carabinier-Cyclists	Cycle wheel	Dark green	Yellow	Cycle wheel	Crown/no.
Ardennes Light Infantry	Boar's head	Green	Scarlet	Boar's head	Crown/no.
Border Cyclists	Cycle wheel	Scarlet	Royal blue	Cycle wheel	Crown/cycle wheel
Guides	Crown/sabres	Dark red	Green	-	Crown/no.
Lancers	Lances	White	Royal blue	-	Lances/no.
Light Horse	Horn & sabre	Yellow	Royal blue	-	Horn & sabre/no.
Light Regts	Grenade	Royal blue	Scarlet	Grenade	Grenade/no.
Divisional Artillery	Cannons	Royal blue	Scarlet	-	Cannons/no.
AA Artillery	Cannons	Royal blue	Scarlet	-	Cannons/winged cannons, torch
Fortress Artillery	Cannons	Royal blue	Scarlet	-	Crown/L or N
Engineers	Helmet	Black*	Scarlet	Helmet	Helmet/no.
Signals	Reel, lightning	Black	Scarlet	Helmet	Reel, lightning
Air Service ground crew	Aircraft motor, propeller	Light blue	Scarlet	-	Aircraft motor, propeller/ no.
Transport Service	Motor wheel	Dark blue	Royal blue	-	unit to which seconded
Supply Service officers	Caduceus	Royal blue	Light blue	Caduceus	-
Supply Service NCOs & men	Letters 'SI'/'I'	Royal blue	Grey-blue	-	unit to which seconded
Administration Service officers	Letter 'A'	Royal blue	Grey-blue	-	Letter 'A'/no.
Medical Service officers	Staff of Aesculapius, wreath	Dark red velvet	Dark red	Staff of Aesculapius, wreath	unit to which seconded
Medical Service NCOs & men	Staff of Aesculapius	Dark red	Royal blue	Staff of Aesculapius	unit to which seconded

* Velvet for officers.

Warrant Officers wore silver wire or white metal insignia on quadrangular tunic collar patches (Reserve officer candidates, pentangular) and greatcoat collars. The WO platoon commander appointment was revived on 11 February 1939 for 205 Infantry (including machine-gunners), Cavalry, Artillery and Engineer WOs commanding platoons; these wore silver braid tunic and greatcoat cuff bars. Leather half-coats were prescribed tunic collar patches, but greatcoat insignia or none at all were common. NCOs wore one silver, corporals two scarlet diagonal stripes above tunic and greatcoat cuffs. A lance-corporal *(soldat d'élite)* of 3-year ChA, Border Cyclist and Motorized Cavalry volunteers wore one red stripe. NCOs and corporals of mounted branches – Cavalry, Artillery, Transport and Gendarmerie – had special rank titles.

An order of 16 December 1939, not widely observed, prescribed khaki tunic collar patches with officers' bronze or WOs' blackened rank insignia for combat uniforms. Lion buttons, silver NCOs' badges and WO platoon commanders' cuff bars were bronzed, and NCOs' rank stripes were to be brown.

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Branch insignia (see Table 8, page 39)

Branch-colour facings, contrasting pipings, and badges indicated branches of service. Branch facings were displayed on tunic collar patches and sidecap flap braids; branch pipings, on tunic collar patches, officers' and WOs' peaked caps, and all ranks' sidecaps.

Insignia were gold for officers, silver for WOs and NCOs, and brass for enlisted men. The peaked cap, tunic collar patches and greatcoat collars showed the branch badge; the tunic and greatcoat shoulder straps bore the unit insignia – i.e. branch badge/unit number – or the unit to which a man was seconded in the case of e.g. medical officers. The sidecap insignia indicated both branch and unit.

Qualification badges

Qualified personnel wore metal badges (gilt for officers, silver for WOs, white metal for NCOs and brass for enlisted men) on tunic and greatcoat left upper sleeves: machine-gunner – 8-point star; marksman – crowned crossed rifles; AT crewman – helmet on crossed cannons (March 1940, crouching lion); mortar crewman – flaming grenade (later winged). Embroidered badges (gold for officers, silver for WOs/NCOs, red wool for enlisted men) were also worn: a diagonal stripe for 12 months' front-line Great War service, plus additional stripes for each additional 6 months; NCOs and enlisted men, 1 or 2x 4-year service chevrons in silver or red respectively. All these were worn on the left upper sleeve, and diagonal wound stripes on the right upper sleeve. Corps, division and brigade commanders wore a 30mm 6-point gold 'command star' above both cuffs.

PLATE COMMENTARIES

A: DENMARK, 9 APRIL 1940

A1: *Generalløjtnant* Wilhelm Prior; General Headquarters, Copenhagen

The Army commander wears the M1923 khaki service uniform with peaked (visored) cap, closed-collar tunic, trousers and shoes. The cap has the very light brown/faded off-white officers' band with the general officers' eight-oakleaf badge. His general officer 'branch' – denoted by the crown, lions and hearts device on his shoulder-strap buttons – was restricted from 1941 to commanders of the Army and divisions.

A2: *Overofficiant,* 2nd Engineer Battalion; Copenhagen

This warrant officer at battalion HQ wears the M1923 'tent hat' with dark brown braid and piping. His M1923 open-collar service tunic has collar rosettes, and his brown shoulder straps have Engineer branch buttons. His Belgian 9mm M1910 Bergmann-Bayard pistol is the standard Danish sidearm.

A3: *Underkorporal,* Bredevad Detachment, 4th Infantry Battalion; southern Jutland

On 9 April this small detachment knocked out three German armoured cars. This conscript NCO carries an 8mm M1924 Madsen section light machine gun. He wears the M1923 steel helmet with (unofficially polished) brass badge; the M1915 light grey field uniform, under the M1910 black greatcoat (note the 'broken straw' cuff chevron), and M1930 marching boots under rolled trousers. His infantry field equipment includes the M1888 waistbelt with M1895 water bottle on the back, M1888 support straps for an M1939 backpack (with M1915 mess tin), M1915 bayonet with black or brown leather scabbard, M1869 entrenching tool, and slung M1938 gasmask canister. Note the M1925 LMG spare magazine carrier, also normally carried by other section members.

B: DENMARK, 9 APRIL 1940

B1: *Korporal,* 14th Anti-Aircraft Battalion; Sønderbro, southern Jutland

This deputy section commander wears the M1931 light grey field sidecap, and the M1915 light grey field tunic. Note above the cuff two M1923 narrow yellow cotton rank chevrons; the crimson collar patches and piping indicate artillery, and the right-breast 'unit button' with the battalion number has the red cloth backing of 1st Battery. His black leather equipment comprises the M1888 waistbelt and support straps, a single M1906 cartridge pouch for his 8mm M1889/1924 Krag-Jørgensen artillery carbine, M1915 bayonet and M1869 entrenching tool, and he also carries the M1938 gasmask canister. Note the unusual arrangement of his M1915 light grey greatcoat, strapped to the bottom and sides of the M1939 brown cloth backpack.

B2: *Sekondløjtnant,* Lundtoftebjerg Detachment, 4th Infantry Battalion; southern Jutland

Attacked by German armour and Stukas on 9 April, this sub-unit disabled two armoured cars and a tank. This platoon commander is wearing the M1923 officers' khaki field uniform with a greatcoat, the shoulder straps faced in very pale brown lace. The M1923 helmet and badge are painted yellow-brown. The M1923 officers' brown leather field equipment comprises the belt with two cross-braces as support straps, binocular case, Bergmann-Bayard holster, and M1938 gasmask canister. Note the M1923 field sidecap with officers' cockade in his belt, and the high lace-up boots for infantry officers and dispatch riders.

B3: *Menig,* 2nd Battalion, Infantry Pioneer Command; Søgaard, south-western Jutland

This dispatch rider wears a brown leather crash-helmet, and the waterproof motorcyclist/AFV overall with dark brown woollen collar facing. He wears an M1923 Bergmann-Bayard holster on the right of his M1888 belt, and an M1938 gasmask canister slung from his right shoulder. He rides a Danish Nimbus MC motorcycle.

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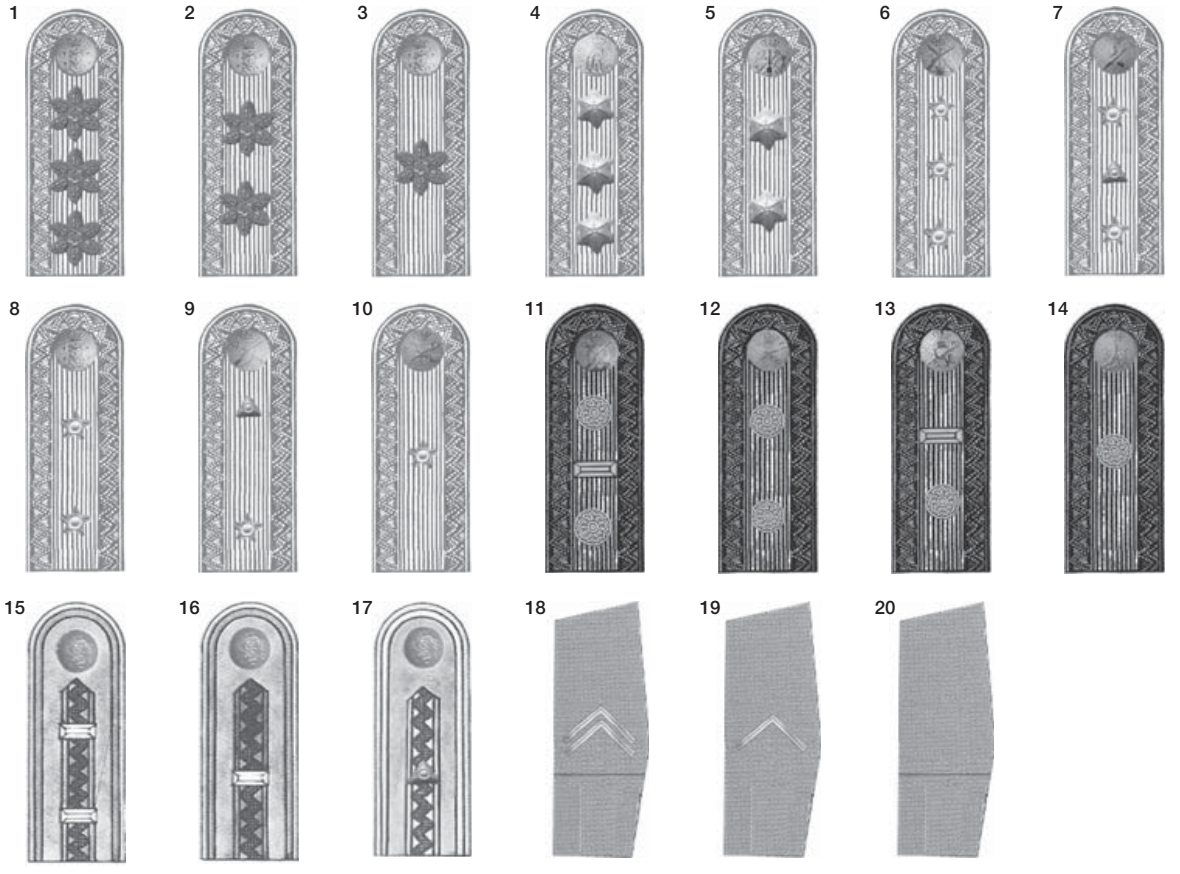
Table 9: Danish Army rank insignia 24 February 1925 – 29 August 1943



The insignia for ranks 1–17 were worn on the shoulder straps, and for ranks 18–20 on the cuffs, of the khaki M1923 tunic and greatcoat.

Officers *(Officersgruppen),* 1–10: Very light brown silk-covered shoulder straps, gilt branch buttons and stars.
General officers, 1–3: 33mm diameter 6-point stars. **Field officers, 4–5:** 24mm stars.
Majors & Subalterns, 6–10: 14mm 5-point & 12.5mm 3-point stars.
Warrant officers *(Officiantgruppen)*, 11–14: dark brown silk-covered shoulder straps with gilt branch buttons, rosettes and bars.
Reserve NCOs *(Underofficerer af Reserven)*, 15–16: khaki cloth straps with dark brown silk inner edging and silk centre braid, bronzed tunic buttons and white metal bars.
Conscript NCOs *(Befalingsmænd)*, 17: khaki strap with officers' very light brown inner edging and silk centre braid, bronzed tunic buttons and white metal 3-point star. **18–19:** yellow cotton cuff chevrons.
Conscript privates *(Menige)*, 20: no cuff insignia.

Key:
1. General (Gen) – King Christian X
2. Generalløjtnant (LtGen) – Army commander
3. Generalmajor (MajGen) – divisional commander, branch inspector-general
4. Oberst (Col) – Life Guards & Guards Hussars Regts
5. Oberstløjtnant (LtCol) – General Staff
6. Kaptajn (Maj) – Infantry. Cavalry rank = Ritmester
7. Kaptajnløjtnant (Capt, from 1932) – Field Artillery; AA Artillery (until 1941)
8. Premierløjtnant (Lt) – Army Air Corps & Balloon Park (until 12.5.1943)
9. Løjtnant af Reserven (Reserve Lt) – Jutland Dragoon Regt & Transport Bn
10. Reservelæge (2nd Lt) – Medical Corps. Infantry rank = Sekondløjtnant
11. Korpsofficiant (WO1 ranking after Capt) – Engineers & Signals (1941, 2 large, 1 small rosettes)
12. Stabsofficiant (WO2 ranking after Lt) – Administration (1941, 2 large rosettes)
13. Overofficiant (WO3 ranking after Reserve Lt) – Veterinary Corps (1941, 1 small, 1 large rosettes)
14. Officiant (WO4 ranking after 2nd Lt) – Army Technical Corps (1941, 1 large rosette)
15. Oversergent (Colour Sgt, from 1932)
16. Sergent (Sgt)
17. Kornet (Cadet Lance-Sgt)
18. Korporal (Cpl) – service tunic (1941, khaki chevron backing)
19. Underkorporal (L/Cpl) greatcoat (1941, khaki chevron backing)
20. Menig (Pte) – service tunic

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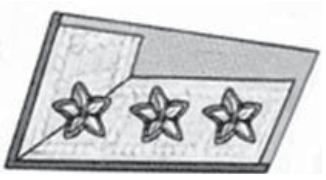
Table 10: Norwegian Army rank insignia 12 May 1934 – 10 June 1940



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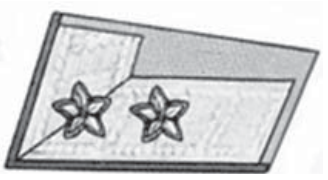

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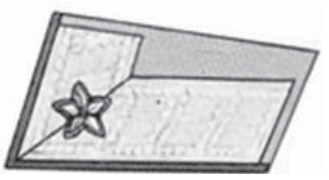

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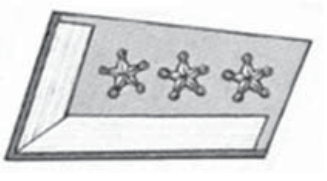

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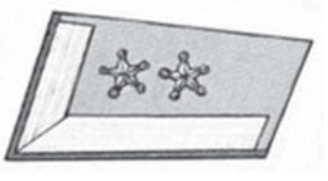

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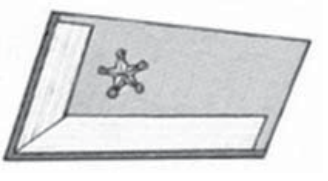

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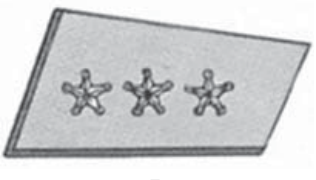

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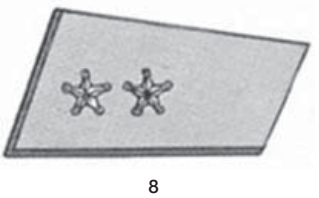

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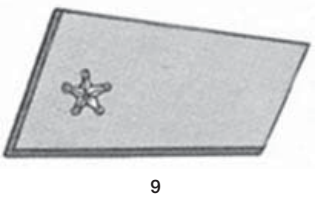

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The insignia for ranks 1–9 were worn on M1934 tunic collars; for ranks 10–11, on M1914 tunic cuffs; and for ranks 12–14, on M1934 tunic cuffs.

Officers *(Befal)*, 1–9: grey collars piped green. **General officers, 1–3:** large matt silver wire stars on wide oakleaf-patterned gold braid. **Field officers, 4–6:** medium matt silver metal stars above silver braid. **Subaltern officers, 7–9:** medium matt silver metal stars.

Non-commissioned officers *(Befal)*, 10–11: greenish-grey cuffs piped red, with 3-2 medium red wool rings. **12:** grey pointed cuffs with single green ring.

Conscript troops *(Menige)*, 13–14: grey pointed cuffs, **13:** vertical green cloth stripe.

Key:

1. General (Gen) – King Haakon VII

2. Generalløjtnant (LtGen) – rank not held during this period

3. Generalmajor (MajGen) – Defence Minister, C-in-C Armed Forces, divisional commander

4. Oberst (Col). Medical officer ranks = Sanitetsoberst–Sanitetsfenrik

5. Oberstløytnant (LtCol)

6. Major (Maj). Veterinary officer ranks = Veterinærmajor–Veterinærfenrik

7. Kaptein (Capt). Cavalry = Rittmester

8. Løytnant (Lt)

9. Fenrik (2nd Lt)

10. Furer (Staff Sgt) – obsolete

11. Sersjant (Sgt)

12. Korporal (Cpl)

13 & 14. Menig (Pte); **13:** Section commander appointment. Royal Guard = Gardist; Cavalry = Dragon

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C: NORWAY

C1: *Generalmajor* Otto Ruge; General Headquarters, Gudbrandsdalen, 15 April 1940

Ruge wears the M1934 service uniform with kepi, although he usually favoured the M1934 winter cap. The light grey greatcoat has shoulder-strap rank insignia, a left breast-pocket flap (obscured here), and grey general officers' buttons. Like the tunic, it has green piping at the collar and cuffs, and though also hidden at this angle his breeches have officers' double green stripes. He carries a Norwegian-made 'Kongsberg' .45 M1911 ACP Browning semi-automatic pistol.

C2: *Korporal*, 11th Møre Infantry Regiment; Dombås, 17 April 1940

Serving with one of the regiments that defeated German paratroopers, this section commander (note cuff rank bar) wears the M1914 field uniform with winter cap, tunic with red collar and cuff piping, and loose trousers. Note on his left breast the bronze marksman's badge and M1936 silver marching-proficiency badge. His field equipment includes a brown leather belt and support straps, with two cartridge pouches and the bayonet for his 6.5mm M1894 Krag-Jørgensen rifle. He has a tin M1914 or M1934 water bottle with grey cloth cover on his right hip, and an M1894 canvas bread-bag and M1934 gasmask bag on the left. Obscured here are the M1899 Bergan khaki canvas rucksack, and the green waterproof shelter-half; see photo on page 3.

C3: *Gardist,* 1st Royal Guards Company; Midtskogen Farm, 9 April 1940

This section machine-gunner has the M1931 'Baltic' helmet, but to save King Haakon from capture he has been rushed into action wearing the Royal Guard's midnight-blue undress coatee with red-piped shoulder straps, and white-striped trousers; the shoulder strap and cuff buttons display infantry branch insignia. The enlisted ranks' waistbelt carries a 'Kongsberg' pistol holster, and a magazine pouch for his 6.5mm M1922 Madsen light machine gun. Note the enlisted ranks' 'tent hat', in the same blue with silver braid, white piping and a green tassel, tucked under his right shoulder strap.

D: NORWAY

D1: *Fenrik,* Alta Battalion; Vassdalen, 7 May 1940

This platoon commander, of a unit mauled at Gratangen ten days earlier, is wearing the M1934 officers' field uniform with ski-cap, tunic, trousers, and M1934 ski-leggings. Note the cap insignia, and the silver rank stars on his green-piped collar. His M1922 service belt has double braces crossed at the back, a 'Kongsberg' pistol holster and triple magazine pouch, and a map case behind his left hip. He carries binoculars, and in his belt a captured German M1924 stick grenade.

D2: *Sersjant,* 3rd Trøndelag Dragoon Regiment; Åndalsnes, 2 May 1940

This deputy commander of a mounted cavalry platoon wears the British M1915 helmet with M1935 Norwegian badge. His M1914 enlisted ranks' greatcoat has silver cavalry buttons, red collar and cuff piping, and below the latter a red double rank ring. Under the coat he wears breeches and spurred riding boots. His equipment comprises an M1894 bread-bag and M1914 water bottle slung on his right and left hips, and a leather bandolier and bayonet for his 6.5mm M1900 Krag-Jørgensen carbine. He holds an M1917 Aasen hand grenade.

LUXEMBOURG

D3: *Soldat de première classe,* Volunteer Company; Ettelbrück, 10 May 1940

This deputy section commander guarding a roadblock has a white 'neutrality band' painted round his M1939 (Belgian M1931) Adrian helmet to distinguish him from French troops. His red-piped tunic has brass buttons on the front, cuffs and shoulders, a brass grenade collar badge, red wool epaulette-loops, a red chevron on his left sleeve only, and below his left shoulder a gold crossed-rifles-and-target marksman's badge. He carries ammunition for his 6.5mm M1900 Mauser in Belgian pouches, and has a slung Belgian L702 gasmask. For marching order he would wear a backpack with a blanket strapped round it, with the leather bread-bag and the water bottle fixed below it.

E: THE NETHERLANDS

E1: *Huzaar*, 1st Armoured Car Squadron; Schipol, 10 May 1940

1st Squadron fought at Ypenburg and Schiphol airfields, 2nd Sqn on the Grebbe Line. This crewman's helmet is not a British M1915 but the deeper, more flared, obsolete Dutch M1922. He is wearing a greyish-blue cotton enlisted ranks' overall, on which NCOs wore cuff chevrons; his equipment is limited to the M1925 pistol and pouch on his M1915 enlisted belt. Officers wore greatcoat-collar rank insignia on their darker blue tailored overalls, with the M1923 belt, cross-brace and M1925 holster.

E2: *Luitenant-adjudant,* 1st Anti-Aircraft Regiment; Utrecht, 10 May 1940

This battalion adjutant wears the officers' and WOs' service uniform, with M1928 kepi. The M1934 tunic has a collar piped in his red branch colour; it displays a gold wire branch badge, and silver and bronze rank and adjutant's stars. He wears officers' trousers reinforced with black leather and piped red, M1912 leggings and ankle boots, and has a slung map case. On his belt are a holstered M1925 pistol, magazine pouch, M1917 assault knife and binoculars. He could also have carried the M1898 'Klewang' cutlass replacing the knife, a privately-purchased officers' or M1916 dismounted troops' canvas gasmask bag behind the left hip, and the M1916 officers' canvas bread-bag and utensils and M1925 water bottle behind the right hip.

E3: *Generaal* Henri Winkelman; General Headquarters, The Hague, 10 May 1940

Winkelman wears the M1915 general officers' peaked cap with extensive gold piping, and the M1934 tunic with serrated gold collar-edging, crossed silver batons and four stars. Over this, his M1923 greatcoat bears four sleeve stars; note also, beside the top left button, his General Staff breast badge. The coat hides his two scarlet trouser stripes.

F: THE NETHERLANDS

F1: *Korporaal,* 8th Infantry Regiment; Grebbeberg, 13 May 1940

This deputy commander of a light machine-gun section, from a first-line infantry regiment that distinguished itself in the defence of the Grebbe Line, wears an M1934 helmet and enlisted ranks' uniform. His only visible insignia are yellow rank chevrons and, just visible on his left upper sleeve, an M1933 1st Class marksman's red 5-point star badge. His M1931 sidecap, with turned-up front peak and grenade branch badge, is tucked in his M1915 belt; the latter has M1917 dismounted troops' canvas (mounted troops, M1915

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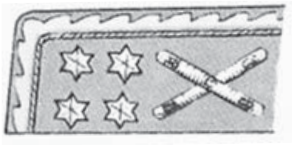
Table 11: Royal Netherlands Army rank insignia 26 January 1934 – 15 July 1940



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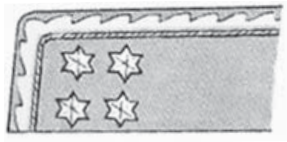

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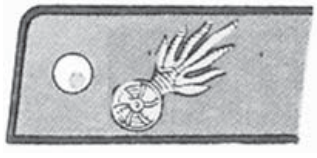

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The insignia for ranks 1–11 are shown on grey M1934 tunic collars; for ranks 12–19, as chevrons backed in branch colour on grey M1934 tunic cuffs piped in branch colour.

General officers *(Opperofficieren)*, 1–3: collars with gold wire serrated edging, silver crossed batons & silver stars (***3***, front two stars gold).
Field officers *(Hoofdofficieren)*, 4–6: collars piped blue, with gold bars, silver stars, & 20mm wheel (**6**, no piping, silver bar, bronze star, 38mm wheel.
Subaltern officers *(Subalterne officieren)*, 7–9: collars piped blue, with silver stars & gold propeller or binoculars (***8***, no piping, bronze stars, **9**, blue collar patch).
Non-commissioned officers *(Onderofficieren)*, 10–16: **10** collar piped scarlet, with 1cm silver rank button & gold thread grenade. **11** collar piped scarlet, bronze cannons & propeller, 2cm gold 'awaiting promotion' button. **12 & 14** cuffs with gold 10mm wide chevrons on blue (**12**) and green (**14**) backing: **12**, gold embroidered instructor's crown onipper sleeve. **13, 15 & 16**, silver chevrons, on backing in scarlet (**16**, no backing). **14 & 15**, plus 2.5mm looped chevron; **14**, gold quartermaster chevron, backed blue, on left upper sleeve. Cuff piping blue (**12**), green (**14**); none, **13, 15 & 16**.
Corporals and men *(Korporaals en Manschappen)*, 17–19: cuffs with yellow 20mm-wide cotton chevrons piped in blue (**18** scarlet unpiped chevron, left cuff only). Cuff piping branch-colour blue (**18**, scarlet).

Key:
1. Generaal (Gen) – Commander-in-Chief
2. Luitenant-generaal (LtGen) – C-in-C Field Army, Fortress Holland & Air Service
3. Generaal-majoor (MajGen) – corps, division & brigade commanders; branch inspectors
4. Kolonel (Col) – Bicycle infantry
5. Luitenant-kolonel (LtCol) – Infantry
6. Majoor (Maj) – Hussar Motorcyclists
7. Kapitein (Capt) – Air Service. Cavalry rank = Ritmeester
8. Eerste Luitenant (Lt) – Military Police
9. Reserve Tweede Luitenant (2nd Lt) – VLK Observer Corps
10. Adjudant-onderofficier (Warrant Officer) or Vaandrig (Cadet WO) – Grenadiers. Cavalry, Artillery rank = Kornet
11. Onderofficier/Korporaal met het radicaal voor hogere rang (AA Artillery) – NCO/Cpl qualified for higher rank
12. Sergeant-majoor-instructeur (Sgt-Maj Instructor) – Infantry. Cavalry, Artillery rank = Opperwachtmeester-instructeur
13. Opperwachtmeester (Sg-Maj) – Hussars. Infantry etc. rank = Sergeant-majoor
14. Sergeant der eerste klasse-Fourier (QM Sgt) – Light Infantry. Cavalry, Artillery rank = Wachtmeester der eerste klasse-Fourier
15. Wachtmeester der eerste klasse (Colour Sgt) – Armoured Cars. Infantry etc. rank = Sergeant der eerste klasse
16. Sergeant (Sgt) – Military Police. Cavalry, Artillery rank = Wachtmeester
17. Korporaal (Cpl) – Engineers
18. Stukrijder der eerste klasse (Senior Pte) – Artillery. Cavalry, Horse Artillery ranks = Huzaar/Rijder der eerste klasse
19. Soldaat (Pte) – VLK branches except AA Artillery. Grenadiers = Grenadier; Light Infantry = Jager; Cavalry = Huzaar; Artillery = Kanonnier; Horse Artillery = Rijder.

brown leather) support straps, one M1895 ammunition pouch for the 6.5mm M1895 Mannlicher rifle, and a Lewis LMG magazine pouch. He also carries an M1916 dismounted troops' canvas bread-bag and M1925 water bottle, M1926 dismounted troops' gasmask bag, and on his left hip the M1895 bayonet and an entrenching tool. The M1915 canvas mess-tin bag is out of sight on the back of his belt, but he has discarded his M1915 canvas backpack and rolled-up greatcoat for battle. Cavalry and Artillery wore a leather bandolier with two sets of five pouches, ordered replaced from 1938 by two sets of three small belt pouches.

F2: *Wachtmeester der 1e klasse,* 1st Hussar Motorcycle Regiment; Wassenaar, 12 May 1940
This regiment engaged German paratroopers north of The Hague. The sergeant (with 8 years' seniority) wears the Motor Service black leather protective clothing: an M1935 crash-helmet, M1917 half-coat (note NCO chevrons just visible above gauntlet cuffs), and leather breeches (M1923 reinforced cavalry breeches were also worn), with M1912 black leather leggings and ankle boots. He carries the New Model No.1 carbine with a two-piece shoulder-sling, and his belt, with its mounted troops' leather support straps, has the M1895 bayonet and cavalry triple pouches. He also carries a slung gasmask bag.

F3: *Sergeant-Majoor,* III Corps Police Company; Betuwe, 13 May 1940
The Military Police, formed 15 July 1919 to reinforce the Royal Constabulary, were designated Police Troops. This NCO wears an M1927 helmet, M1937 cycling half-coat, M1915 trousers and M1912 black leather leggings and ankle boots. The black MP branch colour was not displayed as tunic piping or chevron underlays; but was only visible on the M1914 sidecap and M1915 officers' and WOs' trouser piping. The MPs' distinction was the aiguillette, here in the NCOs' blue-and-silver thread; officers wore it in silver thread cord, and corporals in white. He carries an M1925 pistol with a long black lanyard and a Klewang cutlass, and wheels a Hembrug Zaandam bicycle.

G: BELGIUM

G1: *Lieutenant-Général* Georges Deffontaine, VII Corps; Namur, 10 May 1940
This corps commander wears the M1935 officers' service uniform with a combat general's thunderbolt badges on the M1926 dark red cap band, and on the black, red-piped collar patches above his three rank stars. Note the general officers' double gold bars in both positions, but not on the shoulder straps, which display his stars only. He wears on his left sleeve eight (the maximum) stripes for 4½ years' front-line service in the Great War, and on both sleeves 'command stars'. Deffontaine died in German captivity on 24 September 1940.

G2: *Adjudant chef de section*, Liège Fortress Regiment; Eben-Emael, 10 May 1940
This WO platoon commander wears the M1928 sidecap with silver tassel and M1939 branch insignia; the M1935 WOs' and career NCOs' closed-collar tunic with silver cuff rank bars, and an officers' belt without the cross-brace (the holster strap is separate). His shoulder-strap unit insignia are a white metal crown and 'L'. He displays four Great War stripes for

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Table 12: Belgian Army rank insignia 23 August 1935 – 28 May 1940

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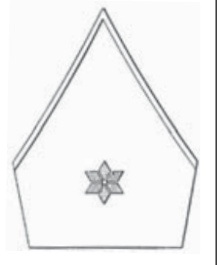

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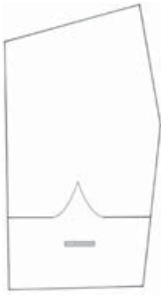

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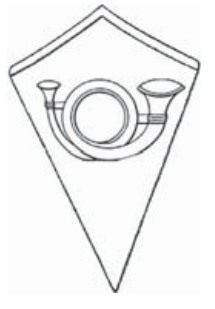

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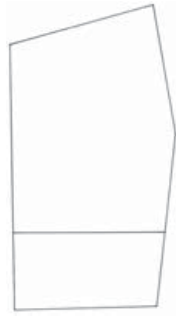

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Ranks 1–9 wore gold-embroidered or gilt metal branch badges, 12mm rank stars, and 30mm x 7mm or 3mm bars on M1935 officers' tunic collar patches.

General officers *(Officiers généraux)*, 1–2: staff 'thunderbolt' or branch badge, stars & 2 bars.
Field officers *(Officiers supérieurs)*, 3–5: branch badge, stars & single bar
Subaltern officers *(Officiers subalternes)*, 6–9: branch badge & stars (**6**: 30mm x 3mm bar).
Warrant officers *(Sous-officiers/Adjudants)*, 10–13: silver-embroidered or white metal branch badge, 12mm star, 16mm x 1.5mm bar on collar patches of M1935 WOs' (or **10**, officers') collar patch: **11** 50mm x 8mm silver braid cuff bar.
Non-commissioned officers *(Sous-officiers subalternes & Troupes)*, **14-20: 14** brass branch badge on tunic collar patches. **15-17:** diagonal 50mm x 5mm silver braid stripes, backed khaki, on tunic sleeves (ordered brown, 16 Dec 1939). **18 & 19**, diagonal 90mm x 6mm scarlet wool sleeve stripes, backed khaki, on tunic sleeves (ordered brown, 16 Dec 1939).

Key (branch facing/branch piping):
1. Lieutenant Général (LtGen, – Chief of staff, corps and divisional commanders, combat branches. Black/dark red.
2. Médecin Général-major (MajGen) – Commander Medical Service. Dark red velvet/dark red.
3. Colonel (Col) – Line Infantry. Scarlet/royal blue.
4. Lieutenant-colonel (Lt.Col) – Border Cyclists. Scarlet/royal blue.
5. Major BEM (Maj) – General Staff (ranks prefixed BEM) attached to Light Infantry regimental staff. Dark green/yellow.
6. Capitaine-Commandant (Capt, 17 years' total service, colloquially 'Commandant')
– Artillery. Royal blue/scarlet. Services rank = Capitaine en premier.
7. Capitaine intendant (Capt) – Supply Service. Royal blue/light blue. Combat branches rank = Capitaine.
8. Lieutenant (Lt) – Gendarmerie Line Regts. Royal blue/scarlet.
9. Sous-lieutenant (2nd Lt) – Ardennes Light Infantry. Green/scarlet.
10. Adjudant Candidat Sous-Lieutenant de Réserve (WO Reserve Officer Candidate) – Lancers. White/royal blue.
11. Adjudant Chef de Peloton (WO Platoon Commander) – Ardennes Light Infantry. Green/scarlet. Artillery & MG infantry rank = Adjudant Chef de Section.
12. Adjudant de première classe (Warrant Officer, 10 years' seniority) – Engineers & Signals. Black/scarlet.
13. Adjudant (WO) – Grenadiers. Scarlet/royal blue.
14. NCOs, silver/white badge; men, brass – Carabiniers. Dark green/yellow.
15. Premier sergent-major (Sgt-Maj). Mounted branches rank = Premier maréchal des logis chef.
16. Premier sergent (Colour Sgt). Mounted rank = Premier maréchal des logis.
17. Sergent (Sgt). Mounted rank = Maréchal des logis.
18. Caporal (Cpl). Mounted rank = Brigadier.
19. Soldat d'élite (L/Cpl).
20. Soldat (Pte). Gendarmerie rank = Gendarme.

2½ years' front-line service, and the ribbons of the 1914–18 Volunteers, Yser, 1914–18 service and 1830–1930 national centennial medals.

G3: *Brigadier,* 1st Light Horse Regiment; Dyle Line, 12 May 1940
This T-15 tank commander wears the M1931 AFV helmet and a first-pattern black leather half-coat with no insignia, worn over his M1935 enlisted ranks' service tunic; his brown leather belt is the British-style snake-clasp pattern. He wears khaki breeches, black leather enlisted ranks' leggings and ankle boots, but carries an officers' 7.65mm FN1922 pistol and binoculars.

H: BELGIUM

H1: *Sergent,* 13th Line Regiment; Lys River, 25 May 1940
This infantry section commander wears the M1931 steel helmet, an M1935 field tunic under his greatcoat with buttoned-back skirts for marching, M1935 khaki trousers, M1891 black leather leggings and ankle boots. He has NCOs' white metal buttons and insignia: a crown branch badge on the collar, repeated with the unit number on his shoulder straps, and a marksman's left-sleeve badge; but his M1939 cuff rank stripes are brown braid. His brown leather field equipment includes the belt and support straps and Belgian-made (or 1918 German booty) triple ammunition pouches, with a 570mm M1916 bayonet with leather scabbard and entrenching tool on the left hip. He would have a brown felt-covered water bottle strapped to an M1915, M1930 or M1935 canvas bread-bag behind his right hip, and a metal utility tin clipped to the rear of the belt, below a rubber groundsheet and unpainted M1896 or greenish-brown painted M1915 mess tin strapped to the M1930 canvas backpack. His weapon is an 7.65mm M1889 Mauser rifle. Many infantry wore the M1915 Belgian pattern of the British M1908 Mills greenish-brown canvas web belt, support straps and quadruple ammo-pouch sets.

H2: *Lieutenant,* 3rd Lancer Regiment; Kortrijk, 24 May 1940
This motorcycle platoon commander wears the M1938 cork helmet, second-pattern greenish-grey leather half-coat and leather breeches with officers' brown spurred riding boots. He has replaced his conspicuous M1935 coloured collar patches with gold metal greatcoat collar insignia of crossed lances over two stars. He wears partial officers' brown leather field equipment: 7.65mm FN1922 pistol (or 9mm GP) and M1898 map case, but not the pistol ammunition pouch or binocular case.

H3: *Caporal,* 1st Ardennes Light Infantry Regiment; Vinkt, 26 May 1940
This deputy section commander defends Vinkt bridge against the German 225. Infanterie-Division, which was implicated in killing 86 civilian hostages. He wears the large M1933 dark green beret of the *Chasseurs Ardennais* over his right ear, with the brass boar's-head branch badge and regimental number. The cyclists' half-coat over his M1935 enlisted ranks' tunic has boar's-head collar badges, shoulder-strap insignia of a crown and regimental number, and two scarlet cuff stripes of rank. He wears cycling breeches, enlisted ranks' brown leather leggings and ankle boots, and carries the M1936 rifle slung. His greenish-brown canvas web equipment is the M1930 Mills belt and support straps with the two large M1934 double ammunition pouches for mounted troops.

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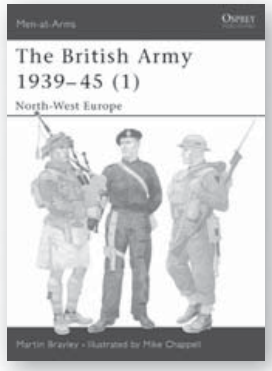

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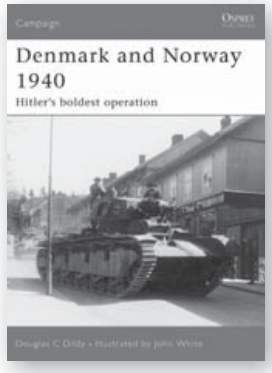

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Dedication

This book is respectfully dedicated to the men of Belgium, Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Norway who fought to defend their countries in 1940; their sacrifice will never be forgotten.

Author's note

Throughout this text, 'gold', 'silver', etc. are used to mean metals of those colours, not actual bullion. The French *cuivre jaune* is translated as brass. In the context of these continental European armies, which maintained a distinction between temporary conscripts and regular cadres, 'NCOs' normally means sergeant and senior sergeant ranks only; corporals ranked among the 'men' or 'troops'.

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The following websites are recommended for further study:
18daagseveldtocht.wikispaces.com; abbi1940.be (Belgium)
chakoten.dk (Denmark)
leger1939-1940.nl; nubo.home.xs4all.nl (Netherlands).

For further information on Nigel Thomas or to contact him, please refer to his website nt-associates.com